



# THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Mainly dry

(IR65p) 60p



## fashion

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## Now Tories fear a Blair revolution

Anthony Bevins  
Political Editor

John Major yesterday warned the country that it risked the midsummer nightmare of a Labour landslide, opening the way for Tony Blair to overturn Tory success with the policies of full-blooded Socialism.

Fresh from the triumph of the Wirral South by-election, the Labour leader yesterday appeared at his party's Welsh conference, in Llandudno, with new MP Ben Chapman, 56, a former civil servant.

Mr Blair said there was a new-found trust in New Labour, "the one nation party of British politics", and that Wirral South represented "nothing short of a political uprising against the Tories deep in their heartlands".

The voters of Wirral South had had their say, now it was time for the rest of the country to have their

chance. Mr Blair urged the Prime Minister: "For heaven's sake, in the interests of the country, stop the dithering."

Faced with the 17-per-cent swing to Labour in Wirral South, the Tory reaction was confused, with some

**There is a new trust in New Labour, "the one nation party of politics" ... Wirral South is "a political uprising against the Tories deep in their heartlands." - Tony Blair**

ministers confidently saying they would win it all back in an election at most two months away on 1 May.

But others warned of the revolutionary threat posed by Mr Blair's Socialist party to the family, community and country.

Delivering both messages at the same time, Mr Major said the by-election marked the end of the

"phony war". He said in a BBC interview: "We will win back Wirral at the general election". But he also warned of the consequences of a Wirral-scale general election landslide.

"In a few weeks' time," he said, "If we had voting like last night, there would be a Labour government with a clear majority, able to do what it wished, without let or hindrance".

On the basis of the Wirral South swing, Labour would have a majority of more than 290. Some of Mr Major's senior advisers are warning that a Labour majority on that scale would deliver more than 100 fully-fledged Socialist MPs into the Labour ranks in the Commons, "with all the risks that would entail".

The risk of talking up the Labour threat is that it might add to Labour credibility and further depress Conservative morale, at a time when even some ministers believe that the party is doomed.

The evidence for that pessimism can be seen in Westminster's up-and-running campaign for the next Conservative leadership contest, which is built on an assumption of defeat.

Mr Major insisted: "The whole Cabinet thinks it's going to win the election, not just me ... and I think the parliamentary [Conservative] party increasingly believes that is the case."

Mr Blair said that while the Government had long ago given up governing, its complacent reaction to Wirral South showed that it had also given up listening.

"They dismiss it as a protest vote of no significance and carry on," he said. "Arrogant, out of touch, squabbling already about who should be the next leader, that is today's Conservative Party." Labour's Chief

Whip, Donald Dewar, said: "Major seems to have lost the plot. It is clear that John Major has been up all night and what's more, his morale has hit rock bottom. Nothing else can explain the gobbledygook that he talked in his interviews today."

**"If we had voting like last night, there would be a Labour government with a clear majority, able to do what it wished, without let or hindrance pretty much." - John Major**

Paddy Ashdown said Liberal Democrats had one message for Mr Major: "The game's up. The longer you leave it the harder you fall."

Labour deputy leader John Prescott, who led the Wirral South campaign, said Labour had never believed the general election result was sewn up. "We've lost four elections," he said in a BBC radio

interview. "But we now think there is the best chance we have ever had".

Labour had contacted 25,000 people during the campaign, and Mr Prescott said: "We had the best organisation and the best candidate. We used all the modern methods. We had good policy, good organisation, and it clearly paid off."

But the Prime Minister told Channel 4 News that Mr Blair was different things to different people. In *Country Life* magazine, he was a country gentleman, but in an interview with the *Sun* he said he ate fish and chips in front of the television. "They are saying different things to different people."

Mr Chapman, is expected to take his parliamentary place on Monday, when the Government will again move into a Commons minority of one, with 322 seats to the Opposition's 323.

Wirral aftermath, page 7

## Stonehenge is French imposter

David Keys  
Archaeology Correspondent

Stonehenge - the pre-eminent symbol of Britain's ancient heritage - wasn't built by the British at all, but by the French, according to the latest archaeological research.

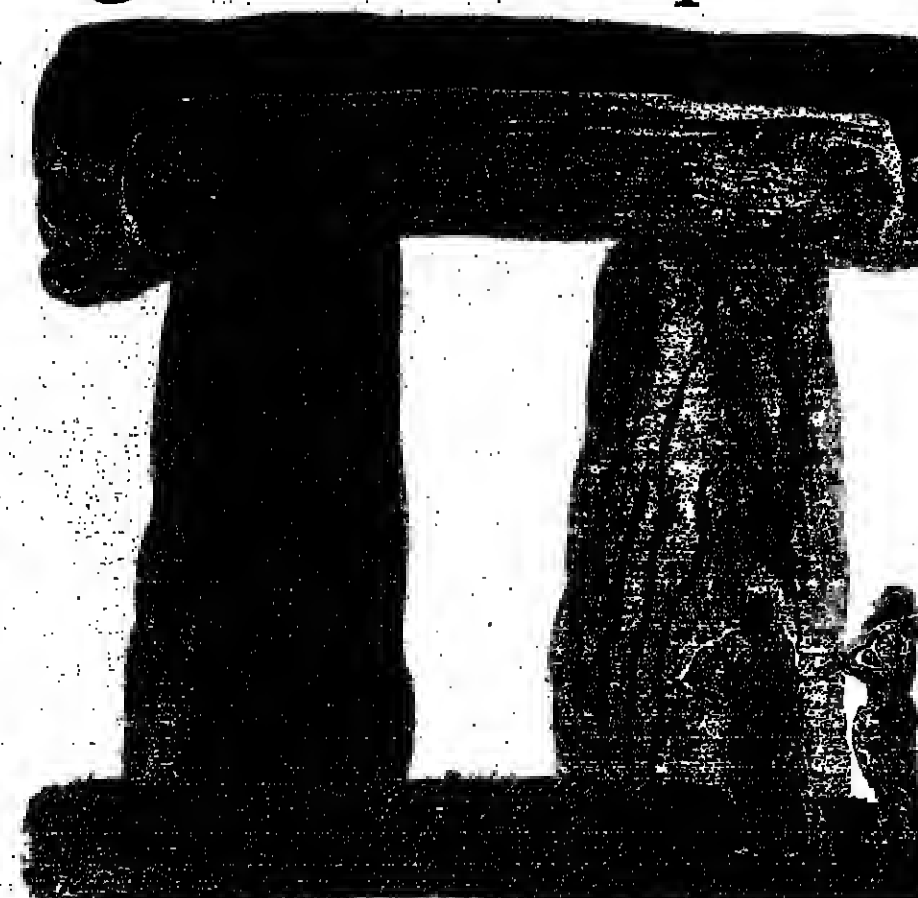
A comparative analysis of British and French prehistoric monuments has revealed that Stonehenge has little in common with other British Neolithic structures, but shares many features with monuments on the other side of the Channel. Stonehenge's horseshoe design is very rare in Britain, but common in western France - especially Brittany.

Dr Aubrey Burl, one of Britain's leading prehistorians, said last night: "The array of non-British features in it suggest that Stonehenge was probably the handiwork of a powerful and intrusive aristocracy from somewhere in western France, perhaps Brittany."

The Stonehenge horseshoe's astronomical alignment - linking it with the mid-winter sunset - is not typical of British prehistoric sites, but is again common in Brittany.

The geometry and astronomical alignments of the rectangle formed by Stonehenge's so-called Station Stones have no equivalents in Britain or Ireland but do have parallels in north-west France. Stonehenge's figurative art is also unique in Britain, but common in Brittany.

Until two years ago, archaeologists thought the main part of Stonehenge was built around 2,000 BC. New dating tests have now revealed, however, that



the monument was constructed around 600 years earlier.

This means that Stonehenge is not an early Bronze Age structure of the so-called Wessex Culture which flourished from c2100 BC to c1600 BC, but was instead built by people in the previous period, the Neolithic, when the stone circles

of Avebury, and four massive earthwork ritual enclosures in Wiltshire and Dorset were constructed at virtually the same time - around 2600 BC.

Significantly, Avebury also once appeared to have had a central horseshoe layout - and may therefore also have shared in the French connection.

It may well be that much of Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset were taken over by conquerors from Western France sometime between 2800 and 2600 BC and that the great prehistoric temple of Stonehenge was as much a symbol of the new order and of conquest as it was of religious devotion.

## Le Carré dines out with Karla

Christopher Bellamy  
Defence Correspondent

The creator of spy-master George Smiley last night sat down to dinner with the man who, in 1991, became the real-life version of Smiley's arch-enemy, Karla.

Yevgeny Primakov, the Russian Foreign Minister, met his favourite author John le Carré, for the first time last night at the Russian Embassy in Kensington Palace Gardens.

The thaw in the Cold War means that le Carré was able to meet the man who headed the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service - VRS, the successor to the KGB - from 1991 until he became Foreign Minister in January last year.

Mr Primakov has had extensive dealings with the KGB throughout his life, and there have been reports that he was an active KGB officer during his early career as a journalist and academic.

Earlier yesterday, Mr Primakov met Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, who presented him with a copy of *Smiley's People* signed by himself and John le Carré.

Mr Primakov, 68, arrived on Thursday and dined with John

Major. Yesterday he made a speech to the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House.

"He's a tough, impressive negotiator who knows his stuff," a diplomat said yesterday. "There's a bit of the old style and a lot of the new style. He's an impressive operator. And he's very secure in the Russian system."

Mr Primakov is a life-long friend of Oleg Kalugin, the KGB general who was chief of counter-intelligence and later turned against the organisation after 1990. They met in 1959 as trainee journalists.

Yesterday's negotiations centred on Nato's plans to enlarge to embrace the new democracies of Eastern Europe which will require a "charter" between the alliance and Russia.

Although Mr Primakov said Russia still opposed Nato enlargement to the east, he and his British counterpart appeared to agree on many things.

It is not quite clear whose idea it was for Mr Primakov to meet John le Carré last night. But a Russian Embassy official said, "John le Carré's name is quite well known in Russia".

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**QUICKLY**

**£1.7m fine for fatal fall**  
Four companies were fined a record £1.7m over the collapse of a ferry walkway in 1994 that left six people dead. Page 5

**NatWest's £50m blow**  
NatWest said first-half profits would take a £50m hit to cover "mispricing errors" at its investment banking arm. Page 22



## news

## significant shorts

## EU postpones decision on citrus fruit restrictions

A European Union committee which is debating whether to impose trade restrictions on citrus fruits has failed to reach a final decision.

The Committee on Plant Health will wait until its next Brussels meeting in a month's time to decide whether to introduce a ban on citrus fruits from South Africa and South America, from where Britain gets its entire summer citrus supply.

The Ministry of Agriculture is fighting swingeing restrictions and British producers are angry that other member states support a ban which would give Mediterranean citrus growers control of the European market.

Southern European fruit is harvested in the winter and the proposed ban, sponsored by Greece, would lead to chronic shortages and high prices of citrus in British shops this summer.

Doug Henderson, chief executive of the Fresh Produce Consortium, said: "We will not allow them to creep this through in carpet slippers."

Ian Burrell

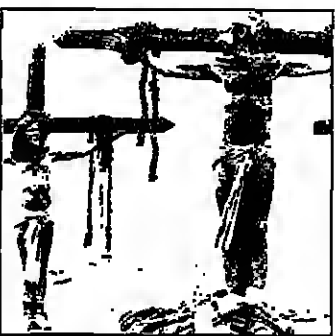
## Mummified body found in cupboard

Police called to a routine domestic dispute found a mummified body of a nearly naked man in a cupboard under the stairs, a court heard yesterday. The badly decomposed and maggot-infested body of 51-year-old Jeffrey Brown, wearing only an anorak, vest and socks, had been in the cupboard since his death five months earlier. Nottingham Crown Court was told.

Cheryl Godward, the resident of the house at Sneinton, Nottingham, and a friend of the dead man, told police she left him at her home with two prostitutes. Judge John Hopkin jailed Godward, 29, for four years after she admitted obstructing the coroner. The judge said that because of Godward's actions in concealing the body, it had been impossible to establish how the former miner met his death.

Godward said when she returned Mr Brown was either unconscious or dead. She put him in the cupboard and nailed it shut. The authorities were only alerted when, five months later, police were called to a domestic dispute and were met by a "pungent" smell.

## New lease of life for Brian



Councillors at Swansea yesterday agreed to lift a 17-year ban on the Monty Python film *The Life of Brian*.

They decided that the movie – a spoof on the Jesus Christ story and condemned as blasphemous by some church leaders when it was first released – could be screened in the city in aid of Comic Relief next month.

In 1980 councillors voted 22-15 to refuse the film a licence.

## Car thieves take a day off

A police force was celebrating another success for its "zero tolerance" anti-crime campaign yesterday – 24 hours without a car theft.

Cleveland Police's three month offensive to clamp down on all kinds of offending, no matter how trivial, has already produced a string of benefits and the car thieves' day off is seen as another milestone. The fresh breakthrough came during the 24 hours of Wednesday when, according to police records, not a single car was taken in Middlesbrough, long regarded as one of the nation's auto crime capitals.

On Thursday there were three car thefts – but even that was not totally bad news in a town which averages seven such thefts a day.

A special crackdown on burglary in the force area led to a 37.7 per cent decrease in the number of incidents last month. Over a four month period 1,214 burglaries have been detected, with 945 arrests and property worth £167,875 recovered.

## BT museum to close

British Telecom is to close the shutters on its national telephones museum, blaming falling attendances and commercial pressures. The central London site houses some 800 exhibits from the UK's dominant role in the development of telephones and telegraphs from the early 19th century to the most modern fibre optic technology.

Despite free admission the museum attracted just 20,000 visitors last year and will shut for good on 1 August. Four staff will be redeployed or take voluntary redundancy, while the remaining two senior employees will try to find a new home for the world's largest collection, which includes a warehouse near Heathrow airport filled with tens of thousands of items. BT insisted it remained committed to managing its heritage. Staff were said to be "very sad" about the decision.

## 'Stowaway' reluctant to leave prison

A judge yesterday expressed astonishment that a fireman should be allowed to "stowaway" in Brixton Prison, south London, for nearly a week after becoming bored with life on the outside.

Judge Jeffrey Rucker said he could not understand why David Watson should want to ask for a further spell of bed and board at Her Majesty's pleasure, and expressed similar puzzlement that the authorities there should find him a cell.

When prison officials realised the fireman was on bail and that they were holding him illegally, he was quickly escorted to unwanted freedom.

"I must admit this has its humorous aspects. But I assure you that we are treating this matter most seriously," said the judge.

## MSF chief re-elected

Roger Lyons has been re-elected general secretary of Manufacturing Science Finance, the biggest white collar union in the private sector. Mr Lyons, a Labour Party supporter, defeated the Communist-backed Joe Bowers, a Belfast regional officer of the union, by 56,510 votes to 26,668 – a margin on two to one.

Barrie Clement

## THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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Belgium ... 35p/40 ... 14p/00  
Canada ... 35p/40 ... 14p/00  
Cyprus ... 35p/40 ... 14p/00  
Denmark ... 35p/40 ... 14p/00  
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## people



Fondest farewell: Imelda Marcos mourns her husband as his body arrives back in Manila

## Imelda's red letter day is no cold comfort for Ferdinand

She may be the proud (and shameless) owner of the world's largest collection of loafers, slingshots, stilettoes, sandals and associated footwear, but Imelda Marcos can still claim familiarity with that most unwelcome feature of modern life – the final demand.

To anyone who has ever been the unhappy recipient of a red letter in a small brown envelope, the news that even the former First Lady of the Philippines is unable to settle her electricity bill may offer a crumb of comfort. But uniquely, it will not be merely the fish fingers that spoil when Imelda's deep freeze is disconnected; the late President himself will feel the heat under his starched collar.

Since the deposed dictator's death in 1989, he has enjoyed presidential repose in a glass coffin beneath the soft lights of a bespoke mausoleum, in which the cool temperature is carefully monitored, so as to maintain his Excellency's excellence for future generations of Filipinos to enjoy.

But life after death does not come cheap. In fact, the Ilcos Norte Electric Co-operative, which supplies power to the mausoleum, in the grounds of the family mansion at Batang – Marcos's birthplace – estimates that seven years' immortality comes to about \$214,500 (including tax).

Trouble is, Imelda's a bit strapped just now. And with

the billions her husband stole from the nation (and gave to his friends in Geneva for safe-keeping) tied up in an endless cycle of legal actions involving several jurisdictions, the lady's financial embarrassment is not likely to be swiftly resolved.

As the deadline for payment expired yesterday, Rommies Pascual, president of the power co-operative, said: "We have given them [the Marcos family] enough time to pay their bills. We are trying our best to talk to Mrs Marcos but she does not seem interested to settle the problem."

"This is an ultimatum," he added firmly. Meanwhile, Mrs Marcos, who returned to the Philippines after her husband's death and was later elected a congresswoman, was not available for comment. An aide simply said she was "out of town".

It is not the first time that Mrs Marcos has been left reaching for the candles. Electricity to her mansion was interrupted in April last year, when the family failed to pay arrears dating from before their sudden departure for exile in Hawaii in 1986. But it was restored after several days when a son-in-law made partial payment.

On that occasion, however, the power co-operative spared the mausoleum, in deference to the town's "favourite son" following the emotional pleas of local government officials, still loyal to the old regime.

Adam Leigh

## Stars shine out in tribute to charming Tinker

The London Palladium was packed yesterday as the theatre industry paid tribute to the famous *Daily Mail* critic, Jack Tinker, who died last year.

It is a measure of Tinker's personal charm that his sudden death from a heart attack last year at the age of 58 was mourned not just by his readers but by the actors he wrote about and his rivals, who have just posthumously voted him *Critic of the Year*.

The packed house was filled with faces from Fleet Street and show business and countless *Daily Mail* readers. Jack in Review was assembled in haste by Tinker's friend Cameron Mackintosh and was a slickly produced two-hour anthology of show tunes and tributes. The proceeds went to The British Epilepsy Association (Tinker's daughter Charlotte died during an epileptic attack at the age of 24).

Tinker would have fought to get a ticket. Dora Bryan sang "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend". The audience squealed with delight at the 73-year-old's high kicks.

Dame Judi Dench, deadpan in a pink dimdi and bad blonde wig, joined Brendan O'Hea in a comic rendition of "You are 16 going on 17" from *The Sound of Music*. Her fellow theatrical dame, Betty Humphries, gave his version of Sonheim's "The Ladies Who Lunch".

The afternoon's highlight was



an extract from the Royal National Theatre's *Gypsies and Dolls*. Theatre critics joined in with the revivalist "Sit Down You're Rocking the Boat". Sir David English in his closing speech intoned that none of them would be replacing Jack Tinker. "A hard act to follow, he became as big a star as anyone he wrote about. He was romantic about the theatre but never sentimental."

Tinker's strength as a critic, aside from his skills as a writer, lay in his almost total identification with his readers' tastes. This unerring ability to understand what they would love and hate earned him their affection and their loyalty. A lot of people love the theatre but the show in Tinker's honour at the Palladium proved that it actually loved him back.

Louise Levine

## City firm denies Horlick rumour

A fund-management company yesterday denied reports that Nicole Horlick, the former City high-flyer, was joining them as an employee.

Ely Fund Managers, which controls about £250m of investors' money, said it had no plans to employ Ms Horlick.

One of the company's directors, Nick Bancroft, said yesterday that no discussions had taken place with her. "We have not talked to her and she has not talked to us. I've not met her and I don't think anybody else here has either," said Mr Bancroft. "The first we knew about this was when we read reports this morning."

The message was the same from a similarly named City firm, Ely Place Investments. A spokesman denied any knowledge of a deal involving Ms Horlick joining them.

"I've only met her once and that was at a presentation and we did not discuss jobs," he said.

Ms Horlick was dubbed "Superwoman" for her ability to juggle her high-flying job as pensions-fund manager at the City bank, Morgan Grenfell, with her role as the mother of five children. She was ousted from the bank over allegations – which she denies – that she tried to lure her team of staff to a rival fund manager. She hit the headlines after inviting the media to join her as she confronted her bosses at Morgan Grenfell over her election from the company.

Ms Horlick could not be contacted yesterday.

## briefing

## EDUCATION

## Children's achievements likely to mirror their parents

A mother's education is a powerful indicator of her children's likely educational achievements, new research suggests. If a mother's highest qualification is an O-level, then her child has only a 12 per cent probability of gaining a university degree, but if the mother is a graduate, the likelihood of her son or daughter following suit is 67 per cent, according to a study by John Ermisch, Professor of Economics Essex university economics professor.

The link is particularly clear between the achievements of mothers and daughters, Professor Ermisch found. His research, published in a paper titled *Family Matters*, also found no evidence to suggest that having a mother in employment when a child is 14 in any way reduces educational attainment. Controversial research featured in a *Financial Times* programme last month suggested children whose mothers worked full-time suffered educationally. By contrast, Professor Ermisch found that having a working mother may even increase the odds that the child goes on to A-levels and beyond.

*Family Matters*, John Ermisch, *Essex Centre for Economic Policy Research*, Tel: 0171-878 2900.

Lacey Ward

## WEATHER

## Threat of drought ebbs away

The threat of drought receded as a wet and extremely windy February blew itself out yesterday. Reservoirs are mostly nearly full – as they should be at this time of year – and groundwater levels have at last begun to rise slowly. Rainfall in England and Wales was more than 38 per cent above the long-term average for the shortest month, following one of the driest Januaries in a record stretching back nearly 300 years.

Rainfall over the six months from September – the period in which the country's water supplies are replenished – has been 80 per cent of the long term average.

This February has seen three weeks of strong winds, with depression after depression sweeping in from the west. The Meteorological Office said it was the most tempestuous period since the start of 1990, when there was the second of the two Great Storms of recent memory. This time, the fastest gust recorded in the north was at Lewis in the Western Isles (101mph on 19 February) and, in the south, at Lee on Solent, Hants (90mph on 24 February).

Nicholas Schoon



## AIDS

## Death toll falls in US for first time

Giving fresh hope in the battle against Aids, the numbers of deaths from the disease fell significantly in the US during the first half of 1996, for the first time since it was first detected in 1981.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta reported that deaths from Aids fell by roughly 12 per cent over the six-month period. The decline was registered in all regions of the country, although its extent varied between different ethnic groups. Deaths among whites fell by 21 per cent, for example, but only by 2 per cent among African Americans.

The drop, which compared with a startling 30 per cent decline recently reported by New York City for the whole of 1996, was attributed to various factors, including the recent introduction of promising new drugs called protease inhibitors. Experts also cited improved Aids awareness programmes and improved access to care for sufferers of the disease.

President Clinton welcomed the figures, but added: "It is also clear that the Aids epidemic is not over". David Usborne, New York

## HOME AFFAIRS

## Inspector warns on jail cuts

The Chief Inspector of Prisons has attacked proposed cuts in funding at a jail, which he said are "unacceptable" and will result in inmates being locked in their cells for almost 24 hours a day.

Sir David Ramsbottom argued that this would prevent inmates being rehabilitated and learning new skills to stop them reoffending on their release. His outspoken report follows a visit to Gloucester prison, which houses both young offenders and adults. He said the jail faced a cut in running costs of 15 per cent by April 2000.

"It is quite unacceptable for a modern prison to find itself in the position where, by the end of the century most prisoners will be locked in their cells all the time save for small periods on exercise and a little association," he said.

Paul Cavallaro, chairman of the Penal Affairs Consortium, commented: "The bleak regime ... would make it impossible to rehabilitate prisoners. It would turn them out of prison much more embittered and more confirmed in criminal attitudes than when they went in."

Jason Bennetto

## ROYAL MAIL

## It's quicker to stick than lick

Self-adhesive stamps are to go on sale in Scotland and Northern Ireland in March on a six-month trial, Royal Mail said yesterday. But they are unlikely to be bought by the public during the trial period, as they are being sold in rolls of 100. If they prove successful, they could go on sale throughout the UK to business and domestic customers.

Royal Mail says it is targeting small and medium-sized firms in Scotland with the message, "It's quick to stick". Alex Gibb, Royal Mail's general manager for Scotland, said: "This is probably one of the biggest changes to British stamps since the Penny Black was introduced more than 150 years ago."



## NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made up 41.2% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1996

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هكذا من الأصل



# So that was London fashion week. But after all the swagger, who will wear the clothes?



A small army of buyers are now deciphering the trends that will fill shops in autumn

Melanie Riskey

Amid all the glitz, glamour and endless hype of London Fashion Week, which ended yesterday, there have been clothes for real women that will make their way into the shops this autumn. Among them are those designed by Alexander McQueen, the maverick couturier for Givenchy, and John Rocha, the Dublin based, Hong Kong-born designer whose clothes are pictured. Every day you will have seen photographs like these in newspapers and on television: but are these clothes what we will really be wearing come September?

Many of the clothes – particularly the more extravagant items designed to catch the eyes of the photographers – do not make it on to shop rails. Between now and autumn an intricate series of events will determine what will be “the fashion”, and what will not.

Rita Britton, from designer emporium Pollyanna in Barnsley, was in London all week buying the clothes her working customers in Yorkshire will want. “What people who read fashion pages don’t realise is that half the clothes shown don’t even go into production.”

A typical fashion show will have between 300 and 1,000 guests. Half of the guests will be press, and will either write about the clothes, or use them in fashion shoots. These people will determine The Trends. The other half of the audience will be fashion buyers from stores all over the world, who determine what we actually buy by shaping The Trends into real clothes.



Buyers are the designers' bread and butter. Without them, clothing like McQueen's and Rocha's, for example, would remain a fantasy. As well as these two designers, Lynette White, fashion buyer for Liberty, is responsible for buying Hussein Chalayan and Helmut Lang.

For her, the catwalk presentation is incidental, the real decisions will be made in the showroom. “The amount we

buy from a particular designer depends on their performance last year, and we only take risks with new designers if they are exceptional,” she said. Yesterday she was writing orders for Rocha's collection which showed on Wednesday. “His clothes sold very well for us last autumn,” she explained.

When a buyer selects clothing it must be wearable and sellable, but not necessarily commercial. You will not find an

Alexander McQueen dress in the shops that consists of just a collar with tassels to cover the breasts. Nor will you find a fuchsia pink faux snakeskin jacket by Antonio Berardi. Even though they were shown on the catwalk, they are unrealistic. However, McQueen bumper trousers have sold at Liberty, as have intricate coats by Yohji Yamamoto. The result is something of a compromise, Lynette White said: “We don't aim to



F-i-f-i-fashion? Far left, an offering from Alexander McQueen that might actually reach the high street and, above, one of his creations that almost certainly will not. Quick change: one of Vivienne Westwood's models, centre, is helped into her next outfit during one of the shows. Photographs: Ben Elwes

buy watered down fashion that people will easily understand, our aim is to educate the customer, to give them the ideas and opportunities to wear exciting clothes.

Rocha admitted that he was not a good salesman, but with his annual turnover now approaching £5m and selling to 20 countries, he has hit on a formula. “My designs come from the heart, and fortunately the buying public understands what I'm trying to say.” He knows that what he does essentially is to “put clothes on backs”. But they are truly beautiful clothes.

McQueen's clothes are aimed at a different customer, so Lynette White takes a different approach. You will not see McQueen g-string denim shorts or peak-shouldered

breast-baring garments like the ones shown on Thursday in Liberty. She will be buying McQueen's belted cowhide coats, cut-out leather dresses, skin-tight jeans and sharply embroidered suits. “Things are going more and more ‘streety’,” she said. “McQueen's show was a breath of fresh air, and proved that it's not important to have the essential black tailored suit anymore. That is not what people want from McQueen.”

So, next time you see a model on the catwalk wearing a seemingly unwearable outfit, remember, there is an army of people out there whose sole aim is to translate what they see on the catwalk into something you can wear, and that is true purpose of London Fashion Week, despite all the hype.

## IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT

Five great sections for the very best in Sunday journalism



### JACK THE LAD

“In a relationship, the woman has the power that comes from man's inability to think about anything but women...”

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### IT IS... ARE YOU?

## A soldier's life is glinting in the bottom of the glass

The Army intends to revive the Napoleonic art of luring new recruits over a pint in the pub.

For the first time in more than 200 years soldiers will be sent out with a brief to enlist young men between 18 and 26 by buying them a beer over a chat in their local.

Over 300 soldiers from the 1st Battalion Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment will be involved in the novel recruitment campaign which begins next Saturday.

They will work in teams of four and go armed with a kitty to buy likely recruits a drink.

The regiment has targeted 88 pubs popular with young people in 15 Midland towns which form their recruiting heartland. The towns include Derby, Nottingham, Worcester, Redditch, Burton, Newark and Chesterfield.

The three-week recruitment drive has been approved by the Ministry of Defence and is being closely monitored by other regiments, who may take up the idea if it is a success.

“We are reverting to the old style recruiting methods of skinning used 200 years ago when barracks didn't exist and soldiers were billeted in inns which were a very fruitful source of recruits,” said Major John Cotterill who is in command of the operation.

“In those days soldiers led by a recruiting sergeant would buy boys a pint of foaming ale and leave a king's shilling in the bottom of the glass.

“Once the prospective recruit had finished his pint he was deemed to have accepted the king's shilling or enlistment bounty and the next thing they knew they had been whisked away on a troop ship to fight Napoleon,” said Major Cotterill.



Offering the king's shilling: A recruiting sergeant 'tempts a village yokel' in 1855

“We will not be kidnapping anyone this time. The idea is not to ply people with drink, mock them over the head and carry them away.”

“Our teams will go into pubs wearing uniforms and seek to engage boys of their own age in conversation,” he added. “They will chat and seek to convince people this is the life for them and they ought to join their local regiment.”

He went on: “It won't be a matter of soldiers walking into pubs and saying ‘Right the drinks are on the house’. They won't be distributing largesse to all and sundry.”

“I suspect they will be buying people a pint of beer because it's cheaper than whisky and you wouldn't get so much time to talk to a bloke drinking a short,” Major Cotterill said.

The project is being financed

by profits made from a snack bar the regiment ran during their six-month stay in Bosnia last year.

The regiment – motto “Firm” – was founded in 1694 and many soldiers are being sent to recruit in pubs in their home towns.

The regiment contains 700 soldiers and requires 100 new recruits every year. Officers are hoping this and other projects during the next three weeks will unearth all the recruits they need for the next year.

The armoured infantry battalion is based in Tidworth, Wiltshire and soldiers will spend much of this year training in Canada.

A Ministry of Defence spokesman said: “This is obviously a very inventive, localised recruiting campaign which may or may not work.”

“It will certainly keep the Army in the public eye in the area from which that regiment raises its manpower.”

The battalion performs a ceremony unique to the Army on 20 September each year. A private is allowed to carry the regimental colours to mark the battle of Alma during the Crimean war in 1854 when every officer and sergeant in the regiment was either killed or wounded and the regimental colours were carried into battle by Private Keenan.

The regiment was the first in the British Army to cross the River Seine during the advance across France in 1944.

The last soldier to be wounded in Northern Ireland before the 1994 IRA ceasefire, Lance Corporal Nobby Clarke, was serving with the regiment in Crossmaglen.

## Lucky God is one of the chosen

David Osborne  
New York

If God has ever considered trading the riches of Heaven for those of Earth, He may have struck lucky. The Almighty has been chosen by American Family Publishers, a sweepstakes organisation, as a potential winner of \$11m (£7m).

In what appears to have been a case of extreme computer eccentricity, a letter of notification was sent by Family Publishers earlier this week to a small Pentecostal church in rural Florida. Rather than being for its Pastor, Bill Brock, however, the letter was addressed directly to God.

“God, we've been searching for you,” it declared, insisting that He – alongside millions of others all across the land, including myself – had been “positively identified” as being in the running for the multi-million pay-off.

Like most sane people, Pastor Brock would have normally thrown the envelope away unopened. It was only when his youth counsellor spotted the addressee that he saved it.

The letter inside, adorned

with the usual quasi-official seals and stickers, went on: “What an incredible fortune there would be for God! Could you imagine the looks you'd get from your neighbors. But don't just sit there, God!”

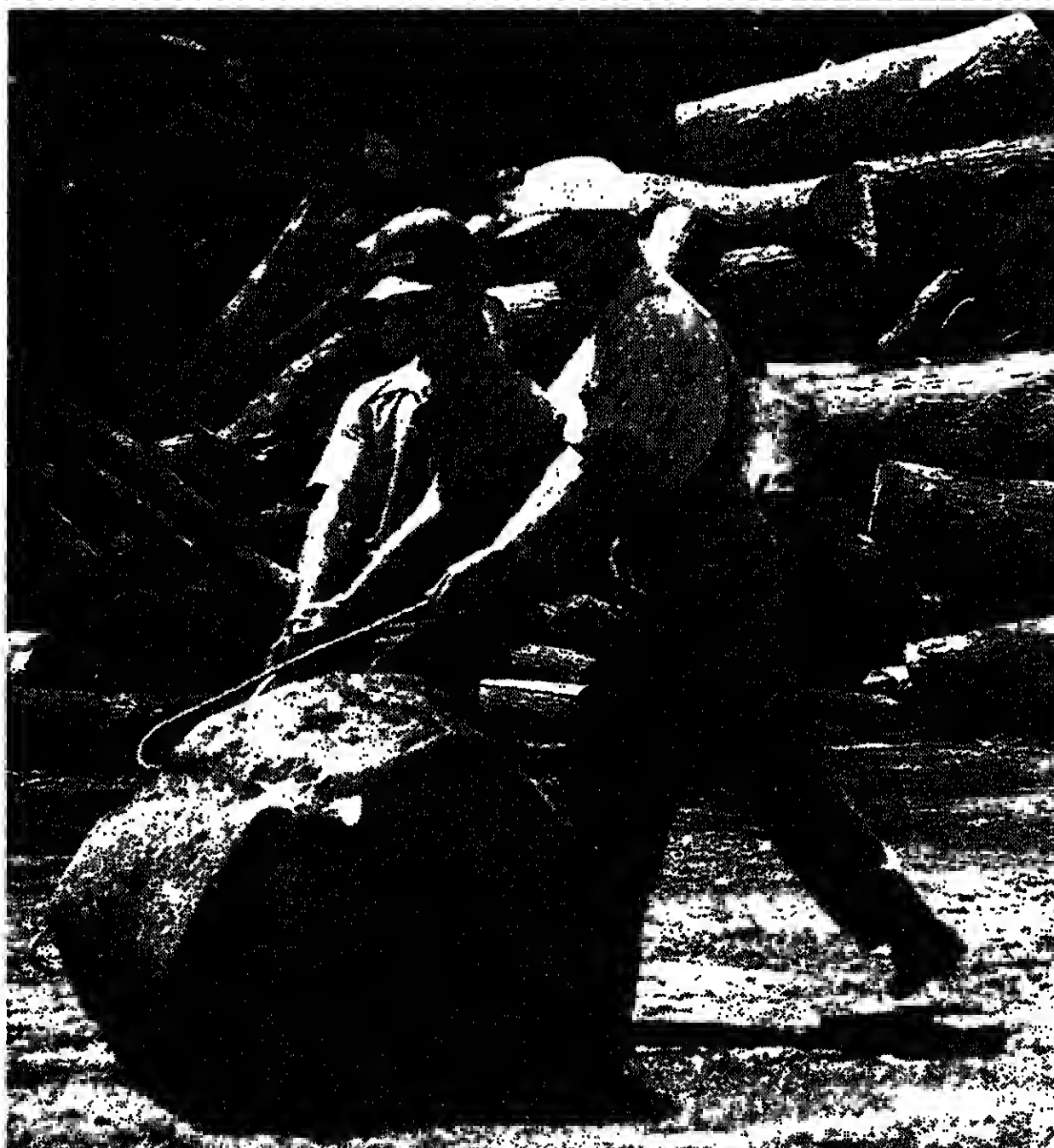
Pastor Brock is holding on to the letter. “I want to consult with my church board, before doing anything crazy,” he said yesterday. However, he says that if God were selected, he would play the Almighty for the sweepstakes people.

“I believe in God, but I don't believe in sweepstakes,” said Pastor Brock, whose church is

the Bushnell Assembly of God north of Tampa. “But if they turn up at the church door with \$11m then I will believe in sweepstakes too.”

Of course, responding to the letter would entail God giving something back to Family Publishers. In any case, the *quid pro quo* was agreeing to subscribe to a motley range of weekly publications I had never heard of.

There was nothing on the list likely to be of much use in heaven. But then, of course, we know now that God does not live in Heaven, after all, but in Bushnell, Florida.



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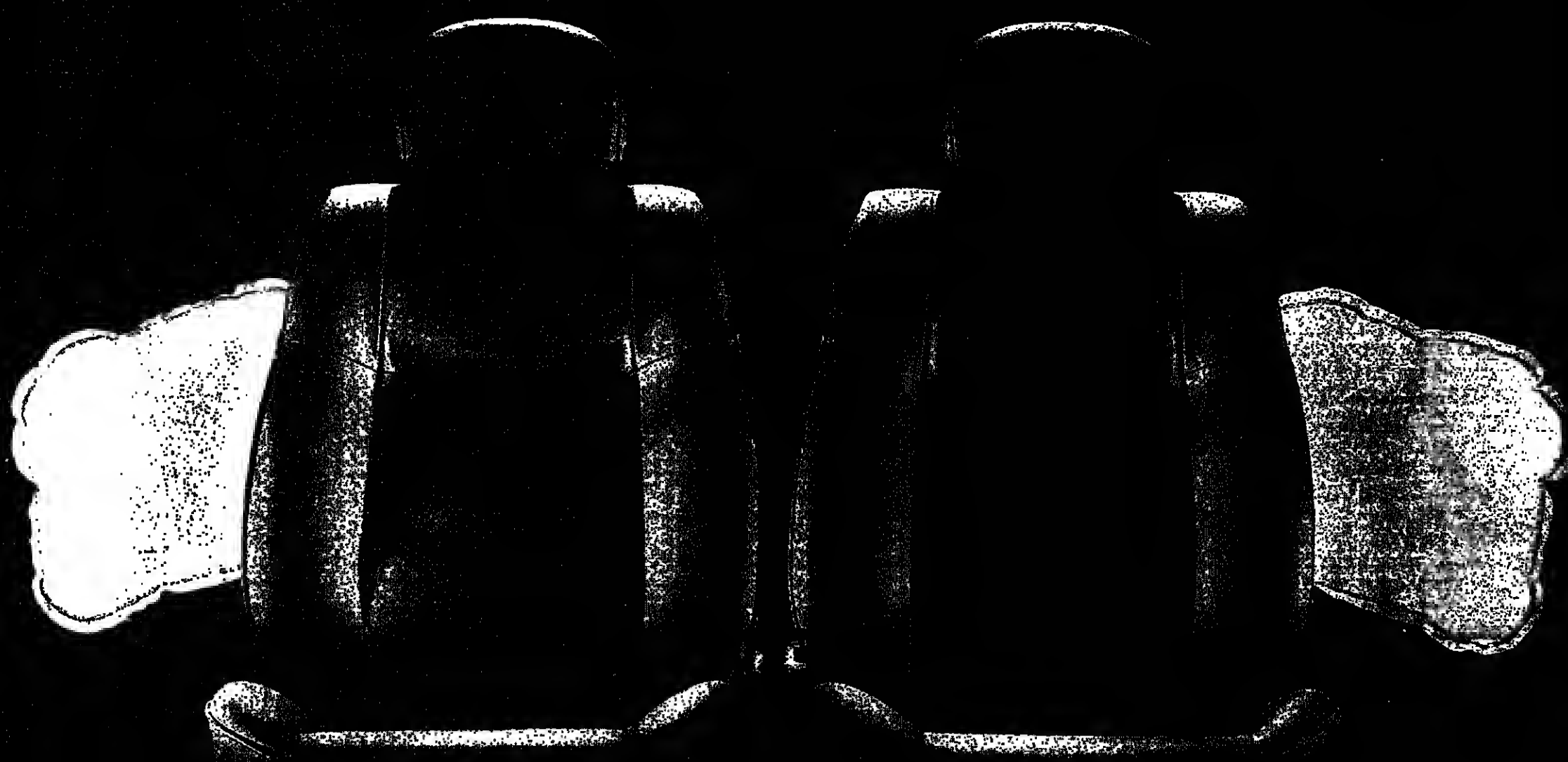
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# £1.7m fines after ferry walkway tragedy

Michael Streater

A judge yesterday fined four companies a record total of £1.7m over the collapse of a ferry walkway which left six people dead and seven others badly injured.

Two Swedish firms who designed, built and installed the walkway at the Port of Ramsgate in Kent were fined a total of £1m, the port £200,000 and Lloyd's Register of Shipping, which gave the device a safety certificate, £500,000 - the first criminal conviction in its 237-year history.

The fines, which follow conviction on 17 February after a four-week trial, pave the way for the injured and relatives of the dead to sue for massive civil damages, likely to total hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Richard Scorer, a solicitor representing a number of the claimants said later: "Compensation claims have already been lodged. I'm confident they will be settled, particularly in the light of the fines and verdict."

Passing sentence in the Old Bailey, Mr Justice Clarke said: "This was a tragic accident which should never have happened. I hope that nothing like it will ever happen again."

The previous largest fine for a charge under the Health and Safety at Work Act was £750,000, imposed in 1988 following three fatal accidents at an oil refinery. Two Britons were among the six passengers who died when a steel pin holding the walkway in place came loose on 14 September 1994, as hundreds of passengers were boarding the Prins Filip ferry from Ramsgate to Ostend.

Steven Jones, 34, from Manchester, and Jason Dudley, 42, from Epping, Essex, died, as well as two French tourists, one Belgian and an Italian. Seven other passengers were seriously injured as more than a

dozen people plunged 30ft on to a steel platform below.

The Swedish companies, FEAB and FKAB were guilty of "gross errors" of design, said the judge. There was also "gross negligence" on the part of Lloyd's Register - or rather its employees. Port of Ramsgate Ltd, he said, must share responsibility for the collapse of the walkway, although "much less than in the case of the other defendants".

A spokesman for the Health and Safety Executive, which brought the prosecutions, said later that it was "satisfied" with the sentences - which it hoped would act as a warning.

The Swedish firms, who on legal advice were not represented in court, cannot legally be forced to pay the fines, because they have no UK assets, but it will bar them from trading here until they do.

Patrick O'Farrell, chairman of Lloyd's Register said later: "I am personally extremely sorry that this dreadful accident happened. We wish to express our sympathies to those injured and to the families of those who died."

The Port of Ramsgate Ltd later said it was considering an appeal against sentence and conviction. "The company does not feel it was culpable for the tragedy which occurred in 1994," said a spokeswoman.

Port Ramsgate Ltd, and the Swedish companies, had denied a Health and Safety Executive charge of failing to ensure the safety of passengers. Lloyd's Register of Shipping had pleaded guilty to one charge brought under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Port Ramsgate Ltd was also found guilty of a lesser charge under the Docks Regulations Act 1988.

The defendants were ordered jointly to pay costs totalling £723,500.



Digging for victory: Campaigner Gabriel Mules at the entrance to one of the tunnels excavated by Victorian entrepreneur Joseph Williamson, right. Photographs courtesy the Liverpool Echo



## Victorian Swampy challenges the planners

Ian Barrell

A subterranean labyrinth excavated by a nineteenth century forerunner of Swampy, the road protester, is under threat from a planned housing development.

The extraordinary network of tunnels beneath the streets of central Liverpool was created by Joseph Williamson, an eccentric philanthropist.

A tobacco baron with a bizarre fetish for tunnelling, he spent 35 years hollowing out immense underground caverns and earning the nickname "The Mole of Edge Hill".

One elaborately-created underground banquet hall is 80ft long and 40ft high, containing entrances to 25 tunnels, some of which extend for miles beneath the city. Now the Mole, like Swampy, is at war with developers, albeit posthumously.

Liverpool City Council has approved plans to build 21 student homes on a site immediately above the main entrances to the labyrinth.

The decision has bewildered local historians, who had hoped to turn the area into a shrine to Williamson's tunnel mania.

The purpose of the burrowing has never been established.

Williamson's obituary in the *Liverpool Mercury* in 1840 concluded: "No earthly use can be assigned for these catacombs."

But now local people believe that the tunnels, cut from solid rock and supported by brick arches, lead to a brighter future of new jobs and tourist revenue.

Some 200 people, who attended a meeting last week of the newly-formed Friends of

Williamson's Tunnels group, argue that the labyrinth could become a major attraction.

It would be a fitting legacy for the underground honeycomb, whose excavation between 1806 and 1840 provided well-paid work during the slump after the Napoleonic wars.

So grateful were the local families, many of whom were also Williamson's tenants, that they

often referred to the eccentric as "The King of Edge Hill".

Williamson's constituency is the once leafy district now has associations with a different underworld, where Liverpool's armed gangs settle their scores and police unearth caches of illegally-held automatic weapons.

Williamson's once splendid home in Mason Street is now a

derelict garage.

Not that he was ostentatious. He lived like a troglodyte at the rear of his house, sleeping in a cavern and using a cellar as his living room.

His burly figure was a familiar sight on the streets of Liverpool in a battered beaver hat, patched brown coat, corduroy breeches and hobnail boots. Nevertheless, the Prince

of Wales, on a visit to the city, described him as "the only gentleman in Liverpool".

Williamson had come from humble origins as the son of a poor Warrington farmer who came to Liverpool at the age of 11 to seek his fortune.

He found work with a tobacco company, which he took charge of years later after marrying the daughter of the boss.

The tobacco trade brought him great riches which he invested in his excavations. Historians estimate that the network of tunnels cost Williamson £100,000, equivalent to £25m today.

Local architect Dave Head said: "The site is worth far more as a tourist attraction than as student accommodation."

But Carol Young, one of the architects planning the student development, said that a rafted design would protect the tunnels from damage. "The fears are unfounded," she said.

The environmental protester "Swampy", whose underground sit-in defied bailiffs during the A30 by-pass protests in south Devon, yesterday pledged to help build a bigger network of tunnels to try to block an airport's second runway.

Campaigners claim that the £172 million scheme for Manchester Airport, approved by John Gummer, the Secretary of State for the Environment, is unnecessary and will blight the countryside.

As Swampy, alias Daniel Hooper, 23, arrived at the site near Mimbberley, Cheshire, he said: "This is pollution for profit and I am determined to stop it."

"I will be here for as long as it takes."

He said protesters were planning to tunnel under the water table to foil attempts to divert them. Work clearing the site is expected to start in the spring.

Police have warned the campaigners that their tunnels are potentially lethal because of seeping methane gas.

Swampy: Runway protest Photograph: Peter Macdonald

## ... while the real one digs in

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## WIRRAL AFTERMATH

## Labour's lean machine beats teacups



Tony Blair with the victorious Labour candidate Ben Chapman. The slick campaign contrasted starkly with the shambolic 1983 campaign of Michael Foot (right)

## Landslide that points to inevitable change

It now requires a leap of faith to predict anything other than a Labour landslide in the general election in two months' time. There is no hard evidence to suggest that, dramatic events apart, the Conservatives can avoid disaster.

If the 17 per cent swing to Labour since the 1992 election in Wirral South were repeated across the country, Tony Blair would win with a majority of 293 seats. This seems so fanciful that it is tempting to believe Michael Heseltine's claim that the voters of the Wirral took the chance to give the Government a "kicking", and that the decision will be very different in a few weeks' time when the voters there are choosing a government rather than sending a message to one.

But there is scant evidence of this from last time. In the Langbaugh by-election before the 1992 general election, there was a 4 per cent swing to Labour. In the general election itself, the swing to Labour was just 2 per cent. So in five months, after the hard-hitting attack on Labour's "tax bombshell", John Major was able to pull back the swingometer by only two points. This time he has two months. Even if he can pull back two points, that would leave a swing to Labour of 15 per cent and a majority for Mr

Blair of 230 seats. Paradoxically, there is more hope for the Tories in the message of the opinion polls. The polls in Wirral South were all within a point or two of the result.

If we take the average of this month's national polls, they suggest a swing to Labour of only 12.5 per cent since the last election. We have yet to hear a Tory politician say: "Never mind real votes in real ballot boxes, look at the opinion polls." But perhaps this is not surprising, because if the polls are right, Mr Blair would still win a 190-seat majority.

After this, the Tories begin to run out of excuses.

They cannot blame defeat on their supporters staying at home. The turnout of 73 per cent was high for a by-election. Nationally, the turnout at the last general election was 78 per cent (contrary to the common assumption of growing apathy, this was up from 75 per cent in 1987 and 73 per cent in 1983). And this cannot simply be put down to Labour's intensive telephone canvassing: they will be doing that too in key marginal seats in the general election, backed by a national campaign.

The only other hard evi-

dence about the mood of the electorate is the weekly trickle of data from local council by-elections. These were seized by the Tories late last year when they appeared to herald a recovery in their fortunes. But that has since faded, resembling what City analysts call a "dead cat bounce". The latest estimates of the parties' share of the votes in these contests, adjusted to take account of local circumstances, show Labour in the lead across the country by 18 per cent - much the same as the opinion polls.

So, in order to forecast even a Labour majority of fewer than 100 seats, we have to assume two things. One is that the voters of the Wirral will return in unprecedented numbers to the Tories in just nine weeks - even though, unlike in previous by-elections, they tell opinion pollsters they will do no such thing.

The other is that the national opinion polls are still getting it badly wrong, despite the changes made by all the polling companies since the debacle of 1992. They are unlikely to be as far out as they were in 1992.

But the final nail through the heart of Tory hopes is that, even if they were that far out, Mr Blair would still win with a majority of 80.

John Rentoul

Anthony Bevins  
Political Editor

The contrast between Labour's lean, mean election machine and the laid-back amateurism of the Conservatives in Wirral South can be measured in tea cups.

It became a habit for Les Byrom, the hapless Conservative candidate, to attend "house-meetings" with visiting Cabinet ministers. But it soon emerged that the invited guests were the party faithful, and that men such as the Secretary of State for Health, Stephen Dorrell, and the Secretary of State for Defence, Michael Portillo, were wasting time talking to the converted over tea and biscuits.

Over at Labour campaign headquarters, in a converted supermarket, the professional sense of purpose and direction were visibly humming under the overall command of Ian McCartney, MP for Macclesfield, a leading member of John Prescott's campaign team.

Mr McCartney was joined by David Hanson, MP for Delyn, a regional party official, David Evans, and a team that united party officials from around the country with local volunteers and party members in a tight-

ly-run unit.

Labour no longer flies by the seat of its pants. Little, if anything, is left to chance and no detail is too small.

When Tony Blair visited the Arrow Park Hospital with the party candidate, Ben Chapman, last Monday, there was a

fat, fact-packed media briefing paper on the problems faced by the hospital trust, and even a

man carrying a cardboard sheath of four golfing umbrellas to protect the leader and his entourage in case it rained.

On the day the Speaker moved the by-election writ in the Commons, Mr Prescott was on hand to listen to a "live sound feed" of Betty Boothroyd at Westminster, to give the campaign its official launch.

This was all in stark contrast to the shambles of the Michael Foot campaign in 1983. Swamped wherever he went by crowds of schoolchildren and television crews, he wandered

around the country with the air

of a man who was not sure

which town he was in, or why he

was there in the first place.

In Wirral, the Conservatives

could not even give an assurance

the by-election would even take

place on 27 February, because

the Prime Minister was dither-

ing over calling a 10 April gen-

eral election, which would have

aborted the Wirral ballot.

They spent much of their time banging on about Labour's threat to local grammar schools, when Labour had identified other issues, such as health and crime, as more important in the mind of the electorate.

Yet when Mr Dorrell and the Home Secretary Michael Howard went to Wirral, they talked about grammar schools instead of their own areas of responsibility - health and crime.

Labour, which had carried out detailed surveys of the voters, both on the doorstep and through extensive telephone canvassing, already knew that the voters' concerns coincided with the party's five pledges: on hospital waiting lists; class sizes; youth unemployment; fast-track punishment for young offenders; tax, inflation and interest rates.

Those were the messages hammered home, and the concerns that were addressed with those voters who were identified as "switchers" - people of all ages and generations who were thinking, many for the first time in their lives, of moving from Tory to Labour.

As much effort was devoted to ensuring that Labour's core vote also turned out on the council estates. If the New Labour switchers were the icing, the old Labour hard core was the cake.

Mr Chapman, the new Labour MP, now has the daunting task of trying to maintain the momentum for another nine weeks. Having achieved the impossible, a swing of 17 per cent swing, on Thursday, he now needs the miracle of retaining the seat in May.

WIRRAL SOUTH RESULT			
LABOUR - SWING FROM CONSERVATIVES			
Ben Chapman (Lab)	22,267	(59%)	
Les Byrom (Con)	14,293	(36%)	
PS: 1983 Lab 14,293	4,257	(10%)	
Lab 1983	7,888	(17% swing Con Lab)	
Electors	30,512		
Turnout	63,224	(73%)	
1992 C 25,595 (50.8%); majority 1,168			
1992 Lab 17,427 (34.0%); Lab-Jam			
1,569 (73.7%)			
Other candidates			
Samuelson Anthony (Lib/Dem)	124		
Samuelson Anthony (Lib/Dem)	49		
Harold George (Con)	184		
Michael Graham (Conservative Lib)	139		
Pauline Goss (Lib/Dem)	142		
Bartholomew (Lib/Dem)	52		
Richard North (UK Ind)	410		
Colin Parnham (UK Ind)	41		
Robert Taylor (Lib)	13		

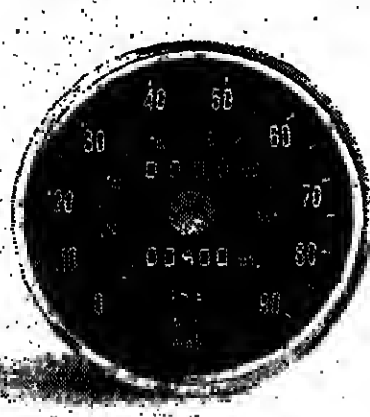
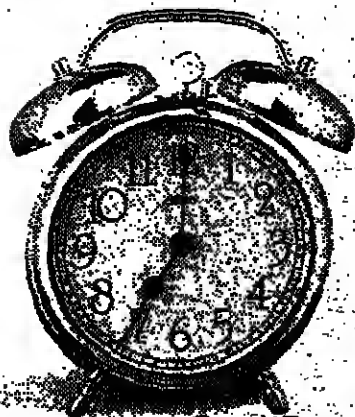
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## news

## Thieves' horde of religious riches

## Matthew Brace

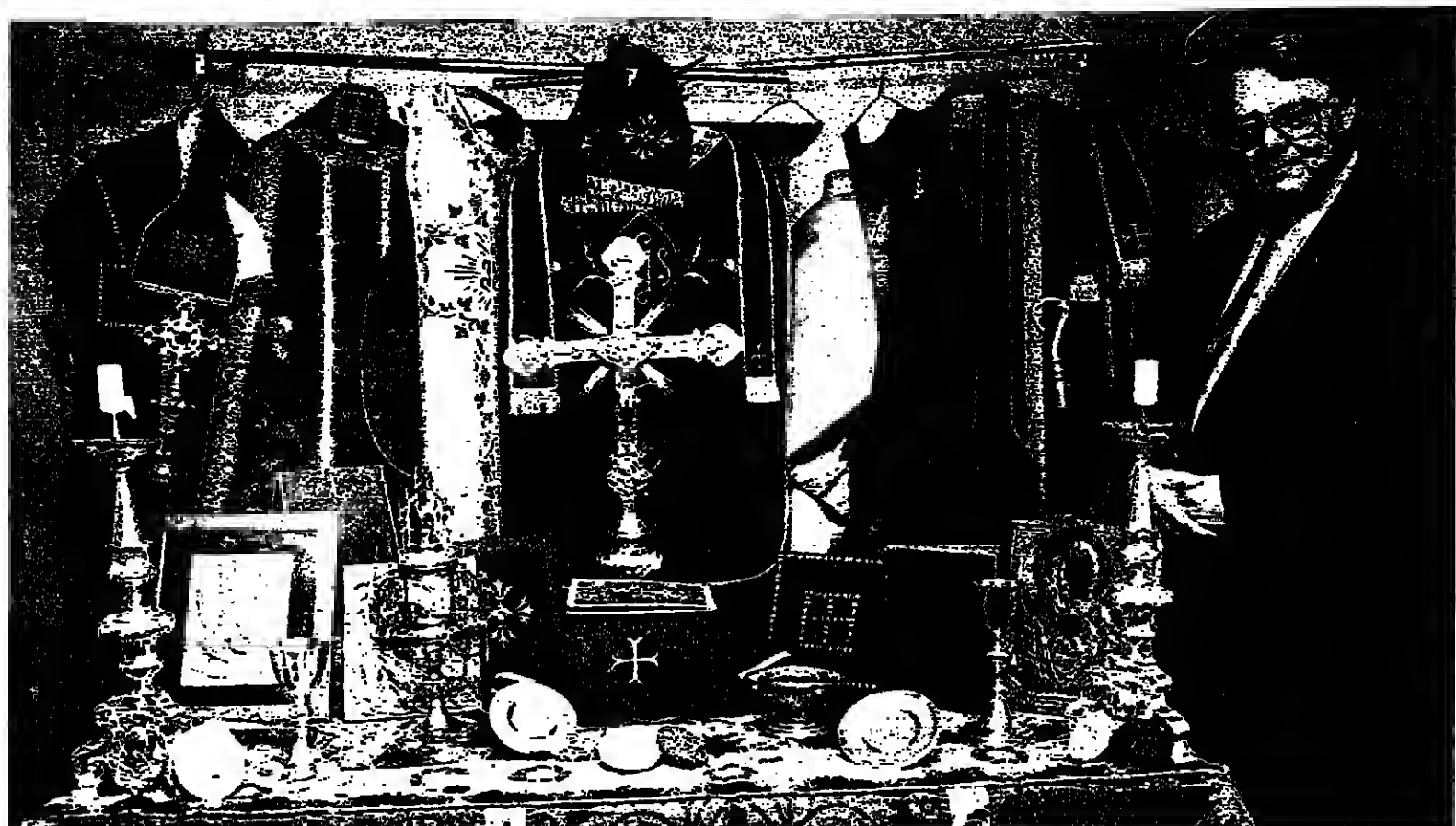
An Aladdin's Cave of altar crosses, candlesticks, communion cups and other religious property stolen from churches and cathedrals around the country has been found in a small north London flat.

Police said the one-bedroom flat was full of ecclesiastical artefacts, including a bishop's mitre from Westminster Cathedral.

Elaborately embroidered velvet clerical hoods, stoles, copes and tunicles are among the hoard discovered hidden in cupboards, wardrobes and a chest of drawers.

Also present in the small flat were tapestries, 18th century gold communion plates, paintings, Latin bibles, ancient seals, chalices, crucifixes, incense burners and altar banners.

Detective Constable Dave Hobart said: "There's enough religious property from this flat to stock several churches."



**Holy hide: Det Con Dave Hubbard with the hoard of church property recovered from a north London flat**

Photograph: Andrew Dunsmore

# BBC gets shot of its broadcast network

**Christian Wolmar**  
Westminster Correspondent

The BBC lost the second B in its name yesterday when it sold its transmitter network to a private company for £244m and will no longer broadcast the programmes it makes.

The sale to Castle Transmission Services, a consortium headed by Houston-based Castle, means that in future the British Broadcasting Corporation will buy in transmission services. Another consequence of the sale, which took effect yesterday, is that the entire UK transmitter network will be in foreign hands, following the sale last year of the ITV system to the US-owned NTL.

to both the BBC and the Department of National Heritage expressed delight at the sale. The BBC is to use the proceeds to invest in providing its own digital television systems and said it would be buying in transmission services at a lower cost than it was paying previously.

BBC Deputy Director-General Bob Phillips said: "We are delighted that in Castle, we have found a purchaser who best satisfied those criteria as well as offering excellent financial terms." The price was £30-£35 million more than forecast.

BBC spokesman said its corporation would not be changing its name: "We may have sold our transmission network but we still consider ourselves as a broadcaster. Anyway, we are called the BBC in our charter."

Virginia Bottomley, the national heritage secretary, said: "The BBC will retain the net proceeds of the sale to invest in digital production technology and related work. It is also good news for licence-fee payers. The BBC have secured a good return on past investment." All 500 staff have been

transferred to the new outfit but may well face job losses.

Derek Foster, the shadow Whitehall minister, said: "This is just the latest in a long line of privatisations which are being rushed through to beat the election deadline. This unseemly haste puts into doubt whether the taxpayer is getting the best deal and there are also bound to be doubts over the job security of the staff."

The partners include Telediffusion de France, part of the France Telecom Group, and investment firms Berkshire Partners and Candover Investments.

The assets in the sale include the land and transmitters on nearly 740 sites across Britain. Under the terms of the deal, 500 BBC staff will transfer to the new company.

BBC transmission began operations 75 years ago from a single transmitting station on the roof of Selfridge's department store in London's central Oxford Street.

The Castle consortium has been granted a 10-year contract for transmission of BBC1 and BBC2 analogue television services and the BBC's five national radio stations. The transmission service for digital television, when it starts, will be put out to tender.

However, one old transmitter has been excluded from the deal and remains in the joint hands of BBC and Castle Transmission Services. The redundant 2LO transmitter, which was used for the first broadcast of radio services to November 1922, has recently been repaired by local engineers in Daventry, where the tiny seven-foot high tower oow stands. "2LO calling" was the famous call sign that preceded all programmes from Marconi House in the Strand, to which the transmitter was later moved.

# Row builds up over the latest privatisation

Christian Wolmar

**Ministers have been accused of rushing through the privatisation of the Building Research Establishment without creating a "level playing field for all bidders".**

Nick Raynsford, the shadow construction minister, has accused his counterpart, Robert Jones, the minister for construction, of being "economical with the truth" over the privatisation of the BRE, which ministers research on building

carries out research on building materials for the Government and the industry. The BRE is being sold to an in-house management team which beat off competition from University College London and the steel

College London and the deal is supposed to be completed within the next few days at a price that has yet to be announced. Earlier this week Mr Raynsford failed in a call for an emergency debate on the issue in Parliament. He said an internal study group into the future of the BRE had been set up to examine a range of issues relating to the organisation's in-

come, efficiency and expenditure. Five members of the in-house management bid team were on that group and Mr Raynsford claimed that this gave them an unfair advantage.

He said that in parliamentary answers Mr Jones had claimed that no documentation relating to that group had been disclosed to either bidder. However, in a subsequent answer, Mr Jones confirmed that five members of the in-house team had been on the student team.

Mr Raynsford told the Commons: "I believe that this involves a serious failure to give full and straightforward answers to parliamentary questions."

Mr Raynsford is demanding an inquiry into the sale by the Commons Environment Committee and said yesterday: "The way in which this privatisation has been conducted raises serious grounds for concern. The Government is desperate to rush this privatisation through for ideological reasons with scant regard to the public interest."

## Adams urges move to prevent parades

Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams said last night that the onus was on the British and Irish governments to resolve the issue of contentious loyalist parades in Northern Ireland.

He spoke out after meeting of residents of the nationalist Garvaghy Road in Portadown, Co Armagh, where Orangemen marched last summer after a three-day stand-off with

This year, Mr Adams said: "Nationalists are not prepared to let the Orange Order walk over them. The days of Orange supremacy are long gone." He said the local MP, Eileen...

Mr Adams added: "The onus however, should not be on the

people of the area but on the two governments to uphold their rights and to prevent a repetition of the disgraceful events of last year."

John Bruton, speaking on a visit to Northern Ireland, said problems over parades were best resolved at local level.

He declined to comment on a call by Mr Adams earlier this week for Irish government monitors to be sent to all flash-

Meanwhile, a major security operation was mounted in Londonderry last night when police

and troops launched a hunt for an IRA bomb. The "explosive device" may have been abandoned in the nationalist Creggan area up to three days ago, said the RUC.

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## Parents to oppose children's bus ban

Michael Streeter

Parents of pupils stopped from using a company's buses because of unruly behaviour have launched a petition to get the ban overturned.

Yesterday pupils of King Richard Secondary School, Portsmouth, whose behaviour has been likened to that of the fictional St Trinian's girls, enjoyed their last trips on the Provincial Bus Company's routes before the week-long ban starts on Monday.

The company said it decided to impose the "trial" ban after an increase in violence and vandalism in which drivers reported windows smashed, emergency exits opened and money stolen.

Colin Yorwerth, the company's operations director, said there had been an incident yesterday morning when two children had thrown coins at a bus window. "I understand the school are looking into it and may have the names of those involved."

He said the firm had lost some customers because of the trouble, but was prepared to risk losing the income from the children to ensure safety. "I am really concerned that somebody could get badly hurt. Safety of the passengers - and of the drivers - is my main priority," he said. The ban, which affects six routes to the Cosham and Paul-

grove area, would be reviewed at the end of next week when they would consider any further action, he added.

Parents have received a letter from the school's head teacher informing them their children will not be able to use Provincial buses next week.

Mr Peter Warburton, said the school had made a great effort to improve pupils' behaviour on buses and had taken disciplinary action against some. In his letter he conceded the ban would affect innocent children but said he supported the decision to try and eradicate "anti-social behaviour".

Parents have claimed the company is overreacting and some are threatening to keep their children off school rather than see them face a long walk.

Margaret Whittaker, 37, from Paulsgrove, said she was planning to start a petition against the move.

"I am really worried. My daughter Tina is 12 years old. It is a 40-minute walk and anything could happen. I am a single parent living with my dad and I can't drive. I will worry myself sick."

The ban does not affect school buses which provide free transport for children travelling from further afield, though the company had reports of trouble on these routes yesterday.



Trouble in transit: Children arriving by bus for what could be the last time at King Richard School in Portsmouth yesterday

Photograph: Tom Pileston

## Giants of computer games to join battle

The two biggest names in the world of computer games consoles have started a battle to win the hearts of the nation's games addicts.

Sony, market leader for the last year with its PlayStation console, yesterday announced a big price cut, the day before rival Nintendo launches a new flagship product.

Sony's PlayStation console will drop in price to £129.99, down from £199.99, from 24 March, exactly a month after Nintendo's N64, priced at about £250, hits the shops.

One industry expert warned that sales of the N64 were likely to be hit by "Buzz Lightyear syndrome", after the *Toy Story* character that became many children's must-have present last Christmas - only to disappear from shelves in the rush to buy.

Only 20,000 N64 units have been shipped to the UK in advance of today's launch.

"It might well be Buzz Lightyear syndrome," said Marcus Hawkins, editor of *GamesMaster* magazine. "Price is going to be a major factor in the war between Nintendo and the other manufacturers."

"The Sega Saturn and Sony PlayStation have become very mainstream. There is a lot of expectation and excitement about N64, but I think it will appeal more to the older, hardened games fan than to young kids."

Sony company executives said the price cut was part of an aggressive price war designed to tempt games players away from the N64.

"Production (of PlayStation) is now running at 1 million units per month. This capacity gives us the opportunity to market PlayStation at an aggressive mass-market price point, bringing in a wider range of consumers," said UK managing director Ray Maguire.

Also in next month, many older PlayStation games titles will drop in price to as little as £20. The move is seen as a direct attack at Nintendo, whose N64 game titles cost between £50 and £70.

A launch party for the N64 was held last night at the Riverside Studios in Hammersmith, London.

Bob Monkhouse compared the event and the guests included pop groups, television stars from various soap operas and sundry Gladiators.

A spokeswoman for Nintendo said: "It's fair to say that 20,000 (N64 units) on the first day won't be enough, but the volume in sales in America and Japan has been so great that they just cannot make them fast enough. They are now on maximum overdrive to meet the expected sales levels."

Another 15,000 machines will arrive within a week and a further 140,000 by the end of May. The flagship game title is Super Mario 64, selling for £59.99.

Two other games will be available immediately, Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire (£59.99) and Pilotwings (£49.99). A fourth game, WaveRider, will be released later costing £54.99.

## Lawyer wins police damages

A lawyer who issued formal complaints against detectives and was "maliciously prosecuted" by them is to receive £45,000 damages after a police apology, a High Court judge was told yesterday.

Legal executive Hazel Jones, 33, sued the Chief Constable of Essex for false imprisonment, malicious prosecution, defamation, malicious falsehood and conspiracy for the "anxiety, distress and humiliation" she suffered when she was acting for a client.

The action, launched in January 1994, was settled when the Chief Constable issued her with an apology and accepted the arrest should not have taken place.

Her counsel, Ben Emmerson, told Mr Justice French: "In addition, the Chief Constable has offered to pay £45,000 in satisfaction of her claims."

"Her reason for bringing this action was to vindicate her good name and reputation, and to remove any remaining doubts which may linger as to the validity of her arrest and prosecution."

The police chief was not represented at the hearing when a statement read out in court described the "oppressive, arbitrary

and unconstitutional" misconduct of his officers, who kept Ms Jones in custody for four hours.

Ms Jones said after the hearing that the policemen involved had since been promoted and had moved from Chelmsford police station. None had faced disciplinary action, she said.

"The amount of the damages demonstrate the extent of the wrong done to me," she said outside court.

Ms Jones was arrested in April 1992 on suspicion of dishonestly handling stolen property after a client, suspected by the police of burglary, brought a bag to her Chelmsford office. The client had been asked by police to bring the bag to Chelmsford police station. A detective told Ms Jones she would have to make a statement about how she came into possession of the bag, but she said she could not supply evidence against her own client.

"The plaintiff was removed from the firm's offices under police escort and in full view of the firm's staff," said Mr Emmerson. She was charged with handling stolen property, photographed, fingerprinted and released on bail, but the charge was dropped a month later.



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## news

## Drug clinic plan gazumped by worried village

Residents of a tiny North Yorkshire village were so horrified at plans to open a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre in their midst that they raised more than £100,000 in three days in a bid to buy the property themselves.

Villagers in Burton Leonard set about raising the cash after hearing that contracts were about to be exchanged on the Crown House nursing home on the village green.

The charity Addiction Recovery Training Service planned to turn the whitewashed property, which is opposite the village primary school, into a centre for 10 ex-addicts.

But after objections to planners failed, the villagers hastily organised a meeting at which they pledged to go without luxuries and hand over their savings in a last-minute attempt to stop the plans.

Within three days more than £100,000 had been pledged by 50 families in the village, which

has a population of 473. They immediately made an offer, which is now being considered, and if it is accepted they hope to exchange contracts by the beginning of next week.

Post office owner Gerlinde Godber said: "This is a very quiet village and we were concerned for the safety of the children and everyone else. It was never Not In My Back Yard - it was just not the ideal spot for it."

"We started raising the money on Sunday and we were in a position to make an offer on Tuesday. It was incredible."

"We had to move rapidly and the whole village pulled together. I'm not surprised we made it. I'm proud to be able to live here."

The villagers plan to sell the property if they outbid the charity, which had been due to exchange contracts yesterday.

Charity spokesman Kenneth Eckersley, 69, said he had writ-

ten to the village committee promising to hack out of the deal if they found another buyer and pay the charity's costs which amount to several thousand pounds.

He said: "It's not my intention or the intention of the charity to upset people anywhere - we don't want to frighten ladies or worry young mothers."

"I find the situation sad but at the same time I can't blame the villagers - they're as fearful of the problem as anybody else. People do not understand our business."

"They hear the word drugs and they get very fearful because drugs is the worst problem in our society today. But it's a problem that has to be tackled by somebody somewhere."

Mr Eckersley said that the charity, which is based in Dover, was already looking at other properties in Yorkshire.

## Charity aims to revive ancient names for pastures green



Rural reversal: If the Common Ground Initiative works, fields could revert to traditional names such as Devil's Dole and Haggs. Photograph: Tom

# Drop the dead dogma

NEW LABOUR'S EARLY PLEDGES ARE

cut class sizes to 30 or under for 5, 6 and 7 year-olds by using money saved from the assisted places scheme

Cost £490 million

Saving £225 million

## It doesn't add up, Mr Blair

The assisted places scheme makes it possible for children from low-income families to attend independent schools. Killing this scheme would achieve nothing. In fact, it would take seven years to phase it out, by which time New Labour would still be £265 million short of the money they need to cut class sizes. (Source: Institute of Public Finance)

Meanwhile they would have damaged the education of up to 65,000 poor children. (The average child in the scheme comes from a family with an income of only £10,900.)

Do these children really benefit? They certainly do. They achieve results up to 3 grades higher at A-level. (Source: London School of Economics)

These tangible results would be thrown away simply because of prejudice against

non-State education. Frankly, this kind of thinking is as out of date as Clause Four. Most Labour voters want success not envy. That's why 55% of them are in favour of the assisted places scheme and only 27% are against it. (Source: MORI)

For the sake of some of Britain's most promising children, help us persuade New Labour to abandon this policy before the election. We have nothing against a New Labour government - just this pointless policy. Please let us pass on your views to your MP. Write to us at Friends of Independent Schools, 56 Buckingham Gate, London, SW1E 6AG.

### Parental Choice Matters

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## Past returns to reclaim our fields of dreams

Stephen Goodwin  
Heritage Correspondent

Devil's Dole, Handkerchief Croft and Seven Men's Mowth are names of what? Maybe the last contains just a bit of a give-away to ageing campfire singers. Haggs, Skirt and Vicar's Hatchet are three more of the same.

Townies can be forgiven for bafflement at the words. But it would be interesting to know how many agri-businessmen or East Anglian prairie farm managers recognise them as traditional field names.

The environmental charity Common Ground today calls for a revival of field names as part of a move away from intensive farming to a more holistic way of working the land. Midsommer Leys or Saffron Ground could be burnt on to the five-bar gate so that the visitor knows this is a field with a character and history, not just a commodity.

Most farmers will regard the group's *Manifesto for Fields* as an idealised urban vision of the countryside, owing more to John Constable than the production of food for a nation of 58 million. But Common Ground says it is time for a popular debate about fields, how they should be used, what we want them to look like, and whether it is sensible for the taxpayer to be pouring in a subsidy of £3.3bn a year.

Grants to farmers have encouraged most of the detrimental changes to the land, the charity claims. Some 97 per cent of hay meadows have gone, along with 80 per cent of chalk and limestone downland and 209,000 miles of hedges. Populations of grey partridges, lapwings and skylarks have plummeted.

Common Ground's manifesto says: "Fields are our un-

written history, carved clearings in the wild wood; the accumulation of practical experimentation, invention and subtlety extending over generations. Yet under our gaze this rich combining of culture and nature has been smoothed and sprayed out of existence in half a lifetime."

They want a shift away from the field as a factory, soaked in pesticides and fertilisers, to wildlife-friendly places where livestock can find contentment under a shady tree or crops are grown organically.

Farming should only be subsidised if it produced "wholesome" food, reinforced, the cultural importance of fields and improved conditions for farm workers, the group says. And food should be grown for local markets, cutting out the costs and pollution of long journeys.

It is not an anti-farmer manifesto and cites the high suicide rate among farmers who are increasingly isolated on large, mechanised holdings. Nor, according to Sue Clifford, a director of Common Ground, is it impractical. "The BSE crisis has taught us a lot about short cuts and cheap food, meanwhile organic farmers we have talked to are rushed off their feet with demand."

Barleyfields, fields that have inspired authors, festival fields and field springs should all be reversed, along with the poetic names given centuries ago, though time and the plough may have obscured their meaning.

The ones given above translate as follows: Devil's Dole - unproductive or difficult land; Handkerchief Croft - small piece of land; Seven Men's Mowth - meadow with work for seven men; Haggs - place cleared of trees; Skirt - land on a boundary; Vicar's Hatchet - land assigned to the parson.

## Suicide theory over 39-floor fall

Michael Streeter

Police in Brazil believe a 31-year-old British management consultant, who fell to his death from the 39th floor of a luxury hotel may have committed suicide.

The body of Katrina Dunleavy, 31, who was on a business trip to Rio de Janeiro for the London-based accountants KPMG, was found by security staff at the five-star Meridien Hotel earlier this week. According to local police, a day before her death Ms Dunleavy had been removed from the "dangerous" out-of-bounds roof terrace from which she is believed to have fallen.

Yesterday staff at KPMG were shocked at the death of their colleague, who had been with the firm for three years. A spokesman said: "It is a tragic loss to her family and to all her colleagues in the firm. She was a very professional person, she was a good operator and highly thought of. We are saddened by this loss."

The spokesman added that the dead woman, who was single, had been on a normal as-

signment in Brazil, a country she had visited on business before. They could not speculate on what may have caused the tragedy.

Ms Dunleavy, who was originally from Liverpool, and who specialised in the telecommunications industry, had travelled with two colleagues to Rio last Sunday for a two-week business trip.

Gilda Antao, the local British pro-consul said a post-mortem examination had been completed but its findings have not been made public. "We do not know the exact details of her death but we have been in contact with her family," she said. "Arrangements are being made to bring her back to Britain."

The terrace from which she is thought to have fallen in the early hours of Wednesday is an emergency exit and cannot be locked, but there is a sign in three languages telling guests to stay away because it is dangerous. A police spokesman told reporters: "The investigation points toward suicide, but we are waiting for the forensic and coroner's reports to close the case."

مكتبة من الأصل



# Court threat to Proctor over shop accounts

Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

Harvey Proctor, the former Conservative MP, could face prosecution for failing to submit accounts on his shirt shop for the past two years.

Thirteen high-profile Tories including the Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine, bought shares in Cottonrose, Lord Archer, the former Conservative Party vice-chairman, was also among the investors who helped Mr Proctor to set up his shop in south-west London after he was forced out of Parliament 10 years ago.

When it last published its figures in March 1994, it was £150,000 in debt. Companies House has confirmed that if Mr Proctor does not deliver the past two years' accounts by April 4 he is likely to be prosecuted under the Companies Act. The case would be heard in a magistrates' court where the maximum fine for failing to submit accounts is £5,000. If Mr Proctor does file accounts in time, he is still liable for a possible late payment penalty of £1,000.

Among the other investors in the company are several who have since faced scandals themselves. Tim Yeo, member for Suffolk South, was embarrassed by revelations that he had an illegitimate child, while Neil Hamilton, MP for Tatton, faced allegations that he accepted cash for questions. David Ashby



Harvey Proctor: 'It has been a struggle to survive'

was deselected by his Leicestershire North West constituency after losing a libel case over allegations that he was homosexual.

Other Tory MPs who put money into Mr Proctor's company included Mark Lennox-Boyd, David Heathcoat-Amory, Richard Shepherd, Sir Nicholas Bonsor, Philip Oppenheim and Michael Brown. Another investor was David Lightbown, the former Conservative whip who died last year.

Leasequre, the public affairs consultancy run by the MP for Walsby Hatfield, David Evans, also put money into the company. Mr Proctor, former MP for

Billericay, said that he had not submitted accounts for his shop in Richmond because difficult trading conditions had left him unable to pay his accountant. Many other small companies had the same problems, he said.

"It has been quite a struggle to survive. It has not been helped by press comment every six months that we are closing down," he said.

"The newspapers treat this company as though it was ICI. Take your tanks off our lawn, please," he said.

Mr Proctor left Parliament in 1987 after facing court charges relating to his homosexuality.

Neil Hamilton and his wife Christine, who both hold shares in the shop, were there four years ago when Mr Proctor was attacked by two men who were later jailed for the assault. Mr Hamilton sustained a broken nose when he tried to help his friend.



Stuck on you: Visitors inspecting a paper mache statue of the Queen Mother at the Rush on Paper (People-Sized People in Paper) exhibition by Peter Rush at Wolverhampton Art Gallery  
Photograph: Joel Chan/Newsteam

## No end to beef ban says EU commissioner

Sarah Helm  
Brussels

British hopes of securing an early end to the beef ban were dealt another severe blow yesterday when Emma Bonino, Consumer Affairs Commissioner, said the Commission was "not even thinking about lifting the embargo."

Ms Bonino, a sharp-talking Italian who is better known in Britain as Minister for Fisheries Policy, has recently been appointed by the Commission to oversee public health in the wake of the beef scandal. She looks likely to prove a tougher opponent when it comes to lifting the embargo than Franz Fischler, the Agriculture Commissioner.

A champion of individual and consumer rights throughout her life, Ms Bonino told the French newspaper, *Le Monde*: "It is out of the question to weaken the embargo. The truth is we are not ever thinking about lifting the embargo. And we will not be thinking about for a long time."

The commissioner's comments come just four days after Britain submitted new proposals to Brussels for a partial lifting of the embargo, along

with certain assurances for further eradication. Presenting the plan, Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, called on his partners to remember the "Florence Agreement", a reference to the much-vaunted deal at last year's June summit. The agreement was presented by the Government as a "victory" and a justification for the "beef war" because it supposedly contained commitments from other European countries to a gradual lifting of the ban.

However, Britain's partners denied that there were any commitments at the time and eight months later they are talking as tough as ever.

The European Commission has no intention of recommending even a partial lifting of the ban until Britain can prove that every possible safeguard is in place. The Commission itself has recently come under fierce criticism from the European Parliament for failing in its duty to monitor mad cow disease in British herds after the first alert in 1989.

Mrs Bonino's new public health post was created in part to defuse criticism from the Parliament and to reassure member states that no such crisis could occur again.

## Media warned on Bridgewater

The senior judge in the Bridgewater Three case yesterday stressed that once the convictions had been quashed and none would be unless and until the Court of Appeal was satisfied it was unsafe.

Lord Justice Roch was responding to "inaccurate" reporting in the media of last Friday's hearing, when the men, convicted 17 years ago of murdering newspaper boy Carl Bridgewater, were released on bail. One of the three, James Robinson, and relatives of cousins Vincent and Michael Hickey were in court yesterday. They heard the judge say that if, at the end of the full appeal hearing next month, the court concluded the convictions were not safe, "then we will quash them and the presumption of innocence in favour of all unconvicted persons is re-established."

The judge said most media coverage last week was accurate, but some was not, so it was necessary to reiterate what the court said "in the hope that in future all reports and not merely some will have the accuracy that court reporting demands."

He said the court had stated it would hear evidence from scientific experts indicating that a

confession by the fourth defendant, Patrick Molloy, who died in prison, had been obtained by a trick. If that evidence was accepted, it would lead to the quashing of his conviction.

The court had then said: "It is in our view right that the public, the appellants and the family of the murdered boy should have the opportunity to learn precisely how this fresh evidence came to light, what its significance is and also to know what further evidence there may be." The court would then go on to consider the effects of all this evidence on the safety of the other convictions.

Describing the court's function, the judge said it was not a court of inquiry or royal commission. It was concerned with what went wrong in the investigation and trial and the effect on the safety of the convictions, not with why things went wrong. It would not inquire into, for instance, which individuals were responsible for non-disclosure of evidence that might have helped the defence, or what other person or persons might have committed the murder.

But the court did have power to refer any evidence of such wrongdoing to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

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Guilty: Paratrooper James Burmeister, 21, (left) accompanied by lawyer, Larry McGlothlin, is convicted. Photograph: AP

# Murders impel US army to flush out racist groups

Rupert Cornwell  
Washington

The Pentagon hopes that the conviction this week of a former paratrooper at an elite unit for a brutal double racial killing will send a powerful signal that white supremacy and neo-Nazism have no place in the beleaguered US Army.

James Burmeister, 21, a member of the 82nd Airborne Division, was found guilty of the first degree murders of a black couple, Jackie Burden and Michael James, as they strolled down a road close to the division's base at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The sentencing phase of the trial, in which prosecutors are seeking the death penalty, began yesterday.

According to testimony during the trial, Burmeister carried out the killings after a night's drinking with two like-minded fellow soldiers - apparently in order to qualify for a spider's web tattoo, which in some US



Julia Burden, Jackie's aunt, hears the verdicts

skinhead groups is a badge denoting the bearer has killed a black person. After his arrest, white supremacist literature, weapons and a neo-Nazi flag were found in his lodgings. Other witnesses said he frequently talked of rounding up blacks and shooting them.

The December 1995 shootings led to an investigation of US troops worldwide to discover the influence of skinhead and other racist groups. The phenomenon was not widespread, with 100 of 7,600 army soldiers admitting they had links with white hate organisations. Three per cent claimed to have been approached to join after they had enlisted, and the whole affair is doubly traumatic for an institution that has prided itself on being one of the first to break down the barriers of racism in American society.

At the 82nd Airborne, 22 men were shown to have had "active, passive or former" ties with extremist groups. All have since been punished, most of them by dishonourable discharge. Among them were Burmeister and his co-defendant Malcolm Wright, who faces separate trial later this month, largely on the basis of evidence supplied by the third member of the trio, Randy Meadows, who has pleaded guilty to reduced charges.

The verdict has come as the Pentagon grapples with two other seemingly endemic ills of the military: the practice of "hazing", or brutal initiation rites for new soldiers, and widespread sexual harassment of female recruits by their supervising officers. Last month, Defense Secretary William Cohen, vowed "zero tolerance" for hazing, after the heavily publicised ordeals of two female cadets at the previously all-male Citadel military college in Charleston, South Carolina.

Sexual harassment in army ranks is also more of a problem than ever. After a spate of cases came to light at a training ground in Maryland last year, more than 1,000 female soldiers contacted a hotline to say they had been similarly victimised. Particularly embarrassing for the Pentagon, it emerged that a member of a board set up last year to investigate sexual harassment was himself an alleged harasser.

# Gold casts shadow on Swiss war neutrality

Louise Jury  
Berne

It is the biggest foreign policy crisis in Switzerland since the Second World War. To the outside world, the questions about the fate of Nazi gold have raised fresh suspicions about the morality of Switzerland's secretive banking system.

For the Swiss, the affair has prompted a complete re-assessment of their war time history and shattered confidence in their neutrality.

Allegations that their post-war success was based on millions stashed away during the conflict, even that the Second World War would have ended sooner had it not been for Switzerland's willingness to trade with the Nazis, have ruffled the confident, logical Swiss and dented belief in what they regard as their good record.

Where they once prided themselves on having accepted a quarter of a million refugees fleeing persecution in the rest of Europe, they now are having explain why they rejected at least 38,000, many of them Jews sent back to the Nazis and certain death.

Flavio Cotti, the Foreign Minister, said this week: "I'm sure ninety-nine per cent of our population which has not learned history has grown up with the conviction that the general attitude of Switzerland during the Second World War was an absolutely correct attitude." Now, he said, they were being asked to come to terms with the "negative aspects".

The initiative has come from the top. The government has appointed a commission under Professor Jean-Francois Bergier. It will seek, Mr Cotti said, "to re-establish the reality of that time". Professor Bergier sees the inquiry as "an opportunity to acknowledge our past so we can confront the present and the future".

The process is not only academic. Switzerland has shunned formal ties with the rest of the world, rejecting membership of the EEA in 1992 and joining United Nations organisations, but not the body itself. Now it is being forced to reconsider the policy of isolation.

Jacques Picard, a member of the Bergier commission, said the country had "lost its image" and was redefining a new one. "We have to understand that we are part of the international community," he said.

With unemployment, which was previously unknown, now at almost 6 per cent, and one of the slowest growth rates in the OECD, the economic situation is also challenging the isolationism of the past.

But the process is proving difficult. Thomas Borer, chief of the government task force on the assets of victims of Nazism in Switzerland, outlined the clash of cultures between Switzerland and its critics.

The Americans, in particular, accuse the Swiss of dragging their feet while the last Holocaust survivors are dying. Yet speed is not the Swiss way.

"We are basically watchmakers," says Mr Borer. "What we make is a very delicate watch which is going to show us very precise time. To build a watch like that takes several years."

With four different political parties in the seven-member cabinet, the constitution itself has come under fire for delaying a resolution.

"The whole system is very shaky and not good at solving anything that isn't an ordinary problem. It's like Swiss history - it is a success story as long as it is business as usual," one Swiss diplomat said.

The big banks, for instance, have just given 100m Swiss francs to a humanitarian fund for victims of the Holocaust. In a poll, only half the population believes the government should also contribute to it. So, rather than risk a referendum, politicians are awaiting initial reports from the Bergier Commission to give them reasons to do so.

Our Swiss system is like Swiss history - a success as long as it's business as usual

Many older people find it hard to accept that their war efforts are no longer lauded. Although documents show the Germans assured Switzerland it could escape invasion, the fear of a German attack was very real to those who spent war years in foxholes on the border.

The younger generation has been more willing to listen, though Lili Nabholz, the politician who steered the lifting of Swiss banking secrecy laws to aid the current investigations, fears some are irritated by foreign criticism. There has been a rise in open anti-semitism.

Swiss Jews recognise that the investigations have met with a certain "psychological resistance" from their countrymen. Rolf Bloch, president of the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities, says they are satisfied there is movement towards solving the moral and financial questions of the war.

Mr Bloch is not given to the loud protests of the American Jewish lobby. Yet, he quietly tells stories which his fellow citizens have not wanted to hear.

In 1942, when he was 12, a young Jewish brother and sister who had escaped from Belgium were found hiding in Berne and were taken in. Naively, the Swiss family told the authorities. Suddenly, the police arrived. The teenagers were thrown out of Switzerland and died in Auschwitz.

"The Swiss population was against the Nazis. It does not mean they were in favour of the Jews," Mr Bloch said. "That is something we cannot forget."

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## international



Exposed: Oil-covered baby sea lions sitting on a rock off Punta del Este, Uruguay, following a spill from a Panamanian tanker which ran aground on the nearby island of Lobos earlier this month and which is threatening more than 200,000 sea lions in the area. Photograph: AFP

## Pavement artists have the drop on the City of Light

### PARIS DAYS

Our friend Sandra, an Irish woman married to a Frenchman, says that the *vrai parisien* pedestrian can always be distinguished from the visitor or newcomer. The unwary outsider stares up at the startlingly elegant buildings on every side. The Parisian always looks down. He or she is, from bitter experience, scanning the pavement ahead for dog poo.

Paris has a serious dog problem, more serious, it is said, than any other city in the world. Partly this is because it has more dogs - 300,000 - than any other city. But that is not all. Other cities, including other French cities, have taken aggressive steps to curb this urban scourge. Paris has adopted a policy of, as

it were, *laissez-faire*. It is not illegal for dogs to foul the otherwise impeccable pavements of one of the most beautiful cities known to man.

On my walk to work the other day I decided, in the name of investigative journalism, to measure the extent of the affliction. I counted 18 deposits in the first 30 yards. Walking to school with the children is a one-mile slalom course to avoid what Charlie calls, from grisly memory, the "squelchy ones".

Continuing my fearless inquiries, I uncovered several disturbing facts. Dogs leave 20 tons of faeces on the streets of Paris daily (who has weighed them, you ask. We will come to that later). An average of 650 people a year are hurt so badly after slipping on dog shit in Paris that they have to be taken to hospital. This works out at nearly two victims a day; broken collar bones are the most frequent injury.

The City of Paris pays £5m a year to a company, Delcaux, which operates more than 100 machines, resembling golf carts, called *caninettes*. Their job is to scour dog poo from the most affected pavements once or twice a day. (The normal street cleaning is supposed to take care of the gutters.) The *caninettes* make their most intensive rounds just after the morning rush-hour and just after the late film on television. Experience has shown that this is when owners and dogs most frequently resort to the public canine toilets, known to everyone else as the streets.

I contacted the technical director of the operation, Dominique Bellanger, who admitted it was not feasible to get around all the 1,500 miles of Parisian streets daily. His team, he said, concentrates on the "most polluted areas". (It is the Delcaux company which has measured the harvest from Parisian dogs). The *caninettes* do a good job but, as Mr Bellanger concedes, the expectation that they will pass by encourages lazy dog-owners to use the pavements, not the gutters.

We are used to thinking of Britain as a nation of doting dog-owners, but we have nothing on the French. In the Bois de Boulogne on a fine Sunday, Parisians parade in their hundreds around the ornamental lakes, with every conceivable species of mutt, turning the Bois into some vast, open-air Crufts. The sentimentality which the French rarely bestow on one another is available sometimes for children and always for dogs. Paris, like California, has dog psychiatrists; even dog and cat astrologers. There are 80,000 dogs with private-health insurance in France.

Close to my office is a dog shop. In the window are dog mittens, fashionable dog coats, *haute-cuisine* dog biscuits, dog toys - including stuffed animals (pets for dogs?) - and packets of the "finest-quality straw from the Pays d'Auge" (*appellation contrôlée* produce for pets?).

There is not a pooper-scooper in sight. I inquired within. The shop did not sell them: no demand apparently, despite the

300,000 dogs living in Paris. Over the years, committees have been formed by the town hall to study the issue, scientific studies have been commissioned, and information campaigns have been aimed at dog-owners (*encouraging more fraternité and less liberté*).

Other French cities have, so to speak, stamped on the problem. Grenoble led the way in the 1980s with instant fines, prosecutions for persistent offenders, even the seizure of pets. At the same time, the city built 120 "sanitary dog spaces" and conducted a permanent civic-awareness campaign.

Similar policies, as well as a tax on dog-owners, were proposed to the city of Paris as long as eight years ago. They were rejected by the then mayor, who said such "repression" would not work and would penalise the old and the poor.

The mayor was, of course, Jacques Chirac, who is notoriously soft-hearted about animals. At one point the future president lectured dog-food

**“An average of 650 people a year are hurt so badly slipping on dog shit in Paris that they have to be taken to hospital”**

manufacturers on the need to make their offerings conducive to drier and more compact dog poo. He was, it is said, reluctant to do anything which might offend so many thousands of dog-owning voters.

Nothing much is likely to change soon. Complaints about dog dirt are the third most frequent reason for letter-writing to the Paris town hall (ahead of fear of crime). But this has been true for many years now. The Agriculture Minister, Philippe Vasseur, will shortly present a law to parliament on the control of pets. It is aimed mostly at controlling savage dogs such as pit bulls and at the better regulation of cat and dog sales. It also proposes a free, if limited, veterinary service for poorer pet owners. There is no suggestion of a licence or tax to control dog numbers, as some had urged.

Non-dog-owning Parisians should console themselves with the wisdom of the 19th-century poet Gérard de Nerval, who provoked the dog lovers of his day by promiscuously with a lobster at the end of a pink ribbon. When questioned on his motives, he replied that lobsters "know the secrets of the sea, they don't bark."

He might have mentioned at least one other reason, in a crowded city, to prefer a crustacean to a dog.

John Lichfield

## Strikers' threat to Prado show

Elizabeth Nash  
Madrid

Spain's Prado museum has launched a spectacular exhibition of European art devoted to sensual pleasure. But the event prompted howls of pain from museum employees, anguished at what they call "conditions of absolute chaos".

Members of the museum's workers' committee interrupted the opening ceremonies this week by whistling and banging drums, and brandishing banners and stickers saying "Save the Prado". They plan a series of protest actions including strikes - although their leader, Antonio Solano, reckons a work-to-rule would be sufficient to bring the museum, housing one of the world's finest art collections, to a standstill.

More than 100 sixteenth and seventeenth century paintings, including four splendid Caravaggios as well as works by Titian and Bruegel, celebrate the pleasures of the five senses. Workers say the exhibition, "improvised at the last minute", was mounted with unprece-

dent haste, causing disruption throughout the museum. They say the accumulation of temporary displays and major repairs to the dilapidated building will close dozens of rooms.

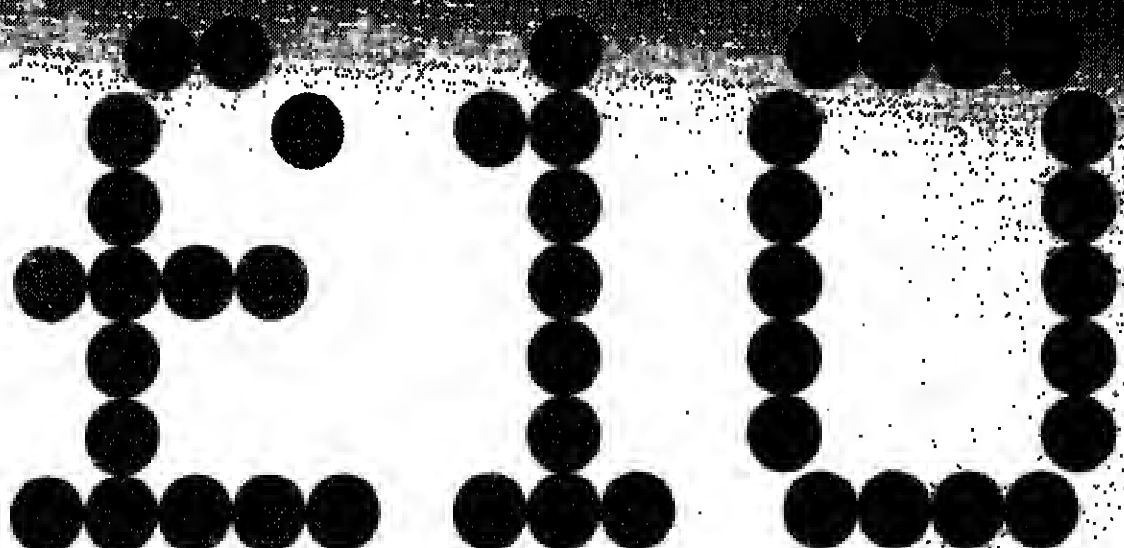
"For weeks visitors have been tripping over ladders and toolboxes, as workers have been driven to the limit, shouting to each other, banging, causing disruption that is totally inappropriate in the Prado," complained Alfredo Pineiro, a member of the workers' committee and a museum restorer.

Workers who have seen their numbers cut and wages frozen are "totally demoralised", Mr Pineiro says. They want some order to be put into the shameful internal organisation of the flagship of Spanish culture.

It was, workers say, "madness" to mount such an ambitious project during major structural repairs.

A spokesman for the sponsoring bank, the BBV, said the exhibition had not figured in its plans for this year but was the result of an invitation by the Secretary of State for Culture, Miguel Angel Cortes.

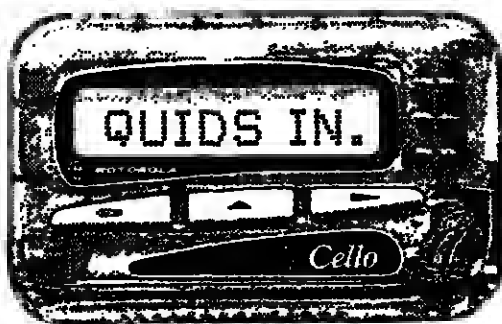
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# Shameful echo of a forgotten holocaust

**Robert Fisk reports on a tale of past terror and fresh injustice**

For Gaspar Aghajanian, it is a matter of principle. For his wife Astrid, it all goes back to the day 82 years ago when the Turks piled the starving orphans of Armenia on top of each other in the sand and burned them alive.

"My mother saved me from the fire by pushing me under a pile of corpses," she says. "She used to tell me afterwards that when she heard the screams of the children and saw the flames, it was as if their souls were going up to heaven."

Astrid is now 83, her husband 85, but their battle - against another generation of Turks - is contained in a thick file of correspondence in their bungalow home in Shoreham-on-Sea, West Sussex.

No one comes well out of those fading letters and cuttings, neither the Turkish authorities in Cyprus who refused to compensate the Aghajanians for the property looted from their home after the 1974 Turkish invasion - on the grounds that they were of Armenian ethnic origin - nor the Foreign Office which failed to persuade the Turks to pay for their plunder, even though the Aghajanians are full British citizens.

"Deplorable," is how one Foreign Office letter - from Tim Eggar, then parliamentary under-secretary - described Mr Aghajanian's situation in 1985. But it went on to admit that his claim would not be met unless there was a political settlement on the island.

What the Aghajanians lost in Cyprus - Persian carpets, furniture, an ancient cedar and stamp collection, photographs of relatives since massacred, a piano, family letters and a large library of valuable books - would only amount to a few thousand pounds. The Turks originally tried to prevent the couple from receiving compensation for their retirement home in northern Cyprus - failing only because Mr Aghajanian was paid for the property before the Turks discovered that he was Armenian. But for Astrid and Gaspar - their families' refugees from the Turkish twice in the same century - the refusal to compensate them for their possessions remains a mark of indignity and shame.

Their story explains all. Astrid's grandfather, grandmother and uncle



Waiting: Gaspar and Astrid Aghajanian at their home in Shoreham-on-Sea, Sussex, where they continue to fight for compensation from the Turks  
Photograph: Andrew Hasson

were shot dead at the start of the 1915 Holocaust against the Armenians, the Turkish massacre that killed at least a million and a half Armenians in what is now Turkey and Syria. Astrid retains faint memories of the long trek over the desert which the women and children were forced to make by Turkish police officers - robbed, raped, starved and burned to death across hundreds of miles of sand.

"At a village one night, my father, who had been deported, came to see us. He told my mother that he thought he was being allowed to say goodbye, that he would be shot with the other men. I remember my mother told me that my father's last words were: 'The only way to remember me [is] to look after Astrid.' We never saw him again."

On the long march south, Turks and Kurds attacked the column of women and children, carrying off girls for rape and forced marriages.

"My mother would run from one end of the column to the other each time she saw them attacking us," Astrid says. "My grandmother died along the way. So did my newly born brother Vartkes. We had to leave him by the roadside."

## My mother saved me from the fire by pushing me under a pile of corpses

was shortly afterwards to become a magistrate. Fleeing the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948, both took refuge in Jordan - where Gaspar secured British citizenship - and then moved to the still British-administered colony of Cyprus.

Gaspar Aghajanian worked for 22 years for the United States radio-monitoring station on the island, re-

tiring to the bungalow the couple had built for themselves on the newly independent island.

"We never had any problems with the Turkish community," Astrid remembers. "Our housemaid was Turkish and we got on very well."

But when the Turks invaded in 1974 - after a Greek-Cypriot coup d'état - the Aghajanians were on the run again from their traditional oppressors.

"We thought at first that the Turks would be disciplined," Gaspar says. "They were no longer Ottomans - and they were a Nato force. Then we heard of a British couple who'd been beaten up in their home. That decided many of us that we should leave."

In a convoy of cars - the British actor Edward Woodward was flee-

ing with them - the Aghajanians made their way to the British sovereign base area at Dhekelia, and thence to Britain.

British residents who managed to return to Turkish-occupied Cyprus reported that the Armenians' home had been looted. "Front door broken and house searched by army. Contents strewn everywhere..." said one report. The British Government refused to take responsibility for British property. Another letter to the Aghajanians said that "Alas, so far as I can judge, you must regard the contents of your house as entirely lost. The house itself, it seems, has been taken over by one of the newly arrived Turkish police officers, who has apparently cleared it and burned all papers."

Gaspar eventually received £15,000 for the house. But when he demanded compensation for the couple's possessions, he discovered

from the Foreign Office - in the words of Tim Eggar's letter - that "the Turkish Cypriot authorities had... enacted legislation to exclude claims made by those persons who were deemed to have Greek or Greek-Cypriot connections. They have now extended this exclusion to cover claims by persons deemed to be of Armenian descent."

"We were never Greek Cypriots and never asked for Greek-Cypriot passports," Gaspar Aghajanian says. "We were full British citizens but we were refused compensation on grounds of our ethnic background. And nothing has been done to correct this disgraceful state of affairs."

When he noticed in 1990 that Margaret Thatcher was to visit Turkey for ceremonies marking the battle of Gallipoli - on the very day that commemorates the start of the Armenian Holocaust by the Turks - Mr Aghajanian wrote to his MP, Richard Loe, to complain.

The British Government came the reply from Francis Maude, then Foreign Office minister of state, "regard the loss of so many lives (in the Armenian massacres) as a tragedy..."

But he continued, "we have long considered that it would not be right to raise with, or attribute to, the present Turkish government acts which took place 75 years ago during the time of the Ottoman empire."

All of which begs a lot of questions for the elderly Aghajanians. If the British Government will not even discuss the Armenian Holocaust with the Turks on the grounds that the present Turkish government was not responsible, how come they let the Turks discriminate today against British citizens of Armenian ethnic origin? Is this discrimination not directly linked to the 1915 Holocaust? And do not visiting heads of state discuss with the Germans the Nazi Holocaust against the Jews - and compensation for the survivors - without blaming the present German government for the atrocities?

"Our Holocaust happened a long time ago," Astrid says. "It is easy to forget us. And Gaspar still writes his letters. But still the Turks can get away with refusing us compensation because of our ethnic origin - even though we are British."

## Shot in the arm for drug drive by Mexico

**Bill Cormier Associated Press**

Mexico City - Mexican officials yesterday announced the capture of a drug lord responsible for tonnes of cocaine entering the United States, just before a US decision on whether to re-certify Mexico as an ally in the drug war.

The attorney-general's announcement came as Congressmen urged President Bill Clinton to deprive Mexico of its official status as a fully co-operative ally in attempts to curb drug smuggling. Such status means Mexico can receive US financial aid to fight trafficking. The State Department was expected late yesterday to announce Mr Clinton's decision on whether to certify the drug programmes of Mexico and 31 other countries.

Under arrest yesterday was Oscar Malherbe de Leon, head of the Gulf cartel, once ranked Mexico's second most powerful. A statement said prosecutors were preparing charges, including drug trafficking and possession. It did not say when he was captured. The arrest was another blow for the cartel, which grew from a backwoods marijuana operation into a booming operation under its now jailed kingpin, Juan Garcia Abrego. The statement said Mr Malherbe assumed the leadership after the arrest last year of Garcia Abrego, convicted in autumn by a US court of smuggling 15 tonnes of cocaine into the US. He was given 11 life sentences and fined \$128m.

Mr Malherbe's arrest is the latest in a flurry of last-minute disclosures before today's Clinton deadline to submit his drug certification recommendations to Congress. With US sentiment growing to deny Mexico status as an anti-drug ally, Mexico's navy burned a tonne of cocaine on Thursday in a public display of its resolve to crack down on trafficking.

## North Korea reels after minister dies

**Andrew Marshall**

North Korea has lost another member of its old guard, adding to the picture of a crumbling regime. The country's state media reported yesterday that Kim Kwang-jin, 69, the country's vice defence minister, died of an "incurable disease" on Thursday. His demise came only days after Choe Kwang, the defence minister, also apparently succumbed to illness, suffering a heart attack.

The military has a key role in the country, and in particular in underpinning the authority of Kim Jong-il, son of "Great Leader" Kim Il-sung, who died in 1994.

But these are evidently not happy times for senior figures in North Korea. Given the lack of any reliable information from Pyongyang, it is hard to tell whether the cause is the winter, the worsening of the food situation, or something more sinister.

South Korean media reported that Kim Kwang-jin had been known to be ill for some time.

There has been a flurry of indications in the past few months that all is not well in North Korea. The prime minister was replaced earlier this year - apparently for health reasons. Chief ideologue Hwang Jang-yong, perhaps fearing a bout of dodgy health himself, defected to South Korea's mission in Peking, where he is still.

South Korea's efforts to persuade China to allow Mr Hwang to travel to Seoul have so far yielded no progress, but South Korean officials believe he may be released as soon as next week. Once there, he will have to be on his guard. This week another North Korean defector died after being shot.

The defection showed that near-famine and economic ruin are combining with a power struggle to make North Korea a distinctly unhealthy place. All of these departures will accelerate change: they may be the product of Kim Jong-il's desire to force the pace as he tightens his grip on power. He has not yet formally inherited the vacant titles of state president and general secretary of the Workers' Party.

Michael Breen, a Seoul-based consultant on North Korea, said that Kim, having used the old guard to secure his grip on power, has now found them blocking his tentative moves to take the country out of hostile isolation and establish dialogue with the United States. "One explanation of why things are moving so slowly in North Korea is because of problems relating to the old generation," he told Reuters news agency.

In South Korea, too, these are troubling times for the ruling party. President Kim Young-sam is attempting to restore his political image after a damaging financial scandal and a national confrontation over a planned new labour law.

Yesterday, he began by replacing his chief secretary and three other top advisers responsible for political, economic and general affairs. "This is the start of a major reshuffle in the government and the ruling party," a Presidential spokesman said. "The cabinet reshuffle is expected early next week."

The President promised on Tuesday to deal sternly with anybody - even close associates and family - who was involved with corruption, and began by banishing his son, Kim Hyun-chul. Yesterday a high-ranking government intelligence officer was also fired after he was accused of providing classified reports to the disgraced son.

The South Korean parliament is also considering a new version of the controversial law on trade unions, but it is unlikely to be finalised before the end of next week. Unhappy with the pace of legislation, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions - which is outlawed and independent of the official trade unions - had called for a half-day strike yesterday, but the response was tepid.



Strike out: South Korean workers marching in Seoul yesterday over a new labour law  
Photograph: Reuters

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## international

# Coastal pollution makes Australian oyster-lovers sick

Sydney — Recently I took a three-day weekend and headed out of Sydney up the coast of New South Wales to try to enjoy a short, peaceful break while the Australian summer lasted. February in Australia is like August in Europe: get-out-of-town time. Peaceful it might have been, but there has been little peace of mind since I returned to Sydney. That is because oysters were a central part of my holiday plan.

On the drive to the small coastal town of South West Rocks, about 250 miles north of Sydney, I pulled in to Wallis Lake to buy four dozen of the area's famous oysters.

Oysters in Australia are abundant, succulent and ridiculously cheap. For the equivalent of £3, you can have a dozen of some of the finest oysters to be found anywhere.

Buy them direct from an oyster farmer, as I did, and you will often find when you get home that he has thrown an extra dozen in the bag for no extra charge. Coastal oysters have long been a staple of the Sydney harbour and many towns are dotted with middens formed by centuries of discarded oyster shells.

Wallis Lake oysters are big business, and deservedly so. They have a taste all their own, and the farmers there have worked hard to build beyond their small community a market that now reaches across Australia and overseas. Wallis Lake

## An outbreak of hepatitis A ruins Robert Milliken's enjoyment of a favoured dish

produces about half the oysters in New South Wales, Australia's most populous state.

When I arrived in South West Rocks, the ritual began. We opened the oysters ourselves, doused them with lime juice and put them out as the first course for our dinner.

"Excellent," pronounced John. "Wonderful!" said Stephen. "Mmmm," said I. "Robert, I think you should go back to Wallis Lake and get some more," suggested Bill. We quaffed our wine and laughed.

Barely a day after I returned to Sydney, I turned on the radio news to hear that Australia has had its worst outbreak of hepatitis A for 20 years, and that the suspected source of infection is Wallis Lake oysters.

More than 400 people are now infected in every Australian state but Tasmania, six times the normal infection rate for hepatitis A over this period. About two-thirds of them are oyster eaters, and most of those appear to have come from Wallis Lake. A 77-year-old Sydney man who came down with the illness after eating

Wallis Lake oysters has died.

The once-proud oyster business there has been devastated. The farmers have shut their doors, and millions of Wallis Lake oysters have been recalled from shops. Already, a Melbourne law firm is preparing a class action to sue whoever is found to be responsible.

Like many others watching the story unfold, my calm turned to shock and then outrage. Although the authorities have yet to prove it, there are strong signs that the infection came from sewage contamination of Wallis Lake during heavy storms in January and February. But there have been plenty of heavy storms in the past. Why now? Because some towns and villages around Wallis Lake, and its river tributaries, have old sewage treatment plants or no conventional treatment plants at all. This time, it seems, the whole system gave way under too much pressure.

The oyster scandal has raised a bigger issue for Australians of how they manage their coastal environments. Oysters have always been a symbol of the Australian good life: fresh, clean and plentiful. Yet more and more Australians are flocking to fragile coastal communities like Wallis Lake to escape city life faster than the authorities are able, or willing, to manage them. If Wallis Lake can become a no-go area, what about bigger waterways like Sydney harbour?

The scandal arose as thousands of people prepared to turn



Sea monster: A float for tonight's gay Mardi Gras in Sydney

Photograph: Reuters

front line for this year's clean-up. After years of cajoling authorities, he is incensed that sewage overflows still pour into the harbour after heavy storms.

"The Sydney Olympic Games are only four years away," says Mr Kiernan. "Do we invite the

world here and then tell them they can't go swimming for fear of catching a disease?"

As for me and my friends, we're all still standing. I'm just putting that strange twinge in the stomach the other day down to a change in the weather.

# Aid workers flee as Zairean rebels seize key town

Peter Smerdon  
Reuters

Nairobi — Zairean rebels yesterday seized the eastern town of Kindu and foreign aid workers fled a major eastern refugee camp for fear of rebel attack, aid agency and UN sources said. Rebels said they were four miles from Tingi Tingi but were delaying an advance for the sake of refugees.

The UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, encouraged by France, said he hoped to persuade member-states to reconsider sending a multinational force to eastern Zaire in light of a serious humanitarian situation.

A UN source said the rebels captured Kindu and its airport on Thursday but in Kinshasa a defence ministry official said Kindu, a transport hub and base for operations in the war zone,

remained in army hands. The UN source added that all 2,000 Zairean troops in Kindu fled without a fight after looting the town and were heading towards the town of Katoko-Kombe, 100 miles away.

Kindu had the northernmost working station on a rail line to South Africa. It also had a large airport used by the military. The aid officials said an immediate evacuation of all expa-

triate had been ordered from Tingi Tingi, 160 miles north-east of Kindu, after camp leaders were warned that the camp would be attacked by another rebel force last night.

Aid workers said Zairean troop reinforcements and mercenaries arrived from the city of Kisangani in Tingi Tingi, backed by warplanes and helicopter gunships. Tingi Tingi has some 170,000 Rwandan and Burundian

refugees who fled earlier rebel advances. Meanwhile, Laurent Kabila, the rebel leader, was reported to have returned from exploratory peace talks in South Africa and headed for his headquarters in Goma. Some 500 Rwandan Hutus, including officers of the former Hutu Rwandan army, have escaped to Kocoya from Tingi Tingi in the last two weeks by air at a cost of \$500 seat, Hutu sources said.

AP — New Delhi

## significant shorts

### Clintons owe millions to Whitewater lawyers

President Clinton and his wife are technically "virtually bankrupt" as a result of \$2.3m (£1.4m) of unpaid legal bills from the Whitewater investigation, while the legal defence fund set up to raise money to cover them is so broke it is charging reporters \$2 a head for lists of donors.

According to the fund's latest six-monthly report, it raised just \$57,523 in the second half of 1996. The Clintons owe \$2.2m to the Williams & Connolly law firm alone for work on Whitewater. The President was "as a technical matter virtually bankrupt," his spokesman Mike McCurry said. But Mr Clinton expected to be "a young, vigorous and employable ex-president," and planned to repay his debts in full. Rupert Cornwell — Washington

### Mercenary concern over PNG

Britain has complained to Papua New Guinea about its use of mercenaries against rebels in Bougainville. Jeremy Hanley, the Foreign Office minister, yesterday called in the High Commissioner from PNG to express his concerns. The Independent reported on Tuesday that Sandline International, a British-based company, was recruiting military advisers. Australian and New Zealand defence ministers also called on PNG to stop using mercenaries. Andrew Marshall

### Yeltsin moves towards mercy

President Boris Yeltsin, taking another step toward abolishing the death penalty in Russia, ordered the Russian foreign ministry yesterday to sign Article 6 of the Human Rights Convention, outlawing capital punishment. Mr Yeltsin simultaneously ordered the justice ministry to work out measures to put this into practice, but set no timetable. Reuters — Moscow

### Nuclear protest in Germany

About 1,000 protesters tried to block the transport of nuclear waste to a temporary holding site in southern Germany. Police said 114 people were detained when anti-nuclear activists blocked roads and a bridge as three nuclear-waste containers were transported by truck from Neckarwestheim to nearby Walheim in Baden-Württemberg state. Another container was brought by train to Walheim from Gundremmingen in Bavaria. Two more containers arrived from a nuclear waste reprocessing plant at La Hague in France. The containers will be loaded on a train for the trip to the nuclear waste storage site at Gorleben. AP — Stuttgart

### India proposes to slash tax

The Indian government proposed slashing corporate and personal income taxes with a new budget plan.

Palaniappan Chidambaram, the Finance Minister, announced that the government planned to reduce the tax on domestic corporations to 35 per cent from 40 per cent, and to abolish a tax on dividends. Mr Chidambaram also proposed scrapping a 7.5 per cent surcharge on corporations. He added that the budget, which must be approved by parliament, would cut personal income-tax rates across the board and bring down the maximum rate to 30 per cent from 40. Reuters — New Delhi

### Smokers' check

United States government regulations on cigarettes that went into effect yesterday require vendors to check the identification of all cigarette-buying customers who look younger than 27. The Food and Drug Administration rules are intended to thwart mature-looking youths under the legal smoking age of 18. Failure to comply could cost store owners \$250. AP — Washington

# Cheaper mortgages.

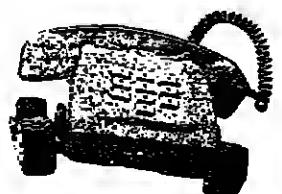
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**IMAGE OF THE WEEK** Calm once again on the Dee Estuary, Wirral, after the local waters had been stirred up by Thursday's by-election. A fisherman repaints his boat, already sporting a touch of fashionable New Labour red. Photograph by David Rose, taken with a Nikon FM2, 160ASA film, 300mm lens at 250th second at f8. To order a print of this picture - price £14 - phone 0171-293 2534



# the long weekend

THE INDEPENDENT • SATURDAY 1 MARCH 1997

Perhaps one reason that conversations about race are so often doomed to frustration is that the notion of whiteness as "race" is almost never implicated. One of the more difficult legacies of slavery and of colonialism is the degree to which racism's tenacious hold is manifested not merely in the divided demographics of neighbourhood or education or class, but also in the process of what media expert John Fiske calls the ex-nomination of whiteness as racial identity. Whiteness is unnamed, suppressed, beyond the realm of race. Exnomination permits whites to entertain the notion that race lives "over there" on the other side of the tracks, in black bodies in inner-city neighbourhoods, in a dark netherworld where whites are not involved. At this level, the creation of a sense of community is a lifelong negotiation of endless subtlety. One morning, when my son was three, I took him to his pre-school. My son ran straight to a pile of Lego and proceeded to work. I crossed the room and put his lunch box in the refrigerator, where I encountered a little girl sitting at a table beating a mound of clay into submission with a plastic rolling pin. "I see a mommy," she said to me cheerfully. "That must mean your little boy is here some, where too." "Yes, he's here," I answered, thinking how sweetly precocious she was. "There, he's over by the Lego." She strained to see around the bookcases. "Oh yes," she said, "now I see that black face of his." I walked away, without responding, enraged - and how can one be so enraged at an innocent child? - yet, not knowing what to say just then, rushing to get the jaggedly dangerous broken glass of my emotions out of the room. I remember being three so well. Three was the age when I learnt that I was black, the coloured kid, monkey child, different. What made me so angry and wordless in this encounter 40 years later was the realisation that none of the little white children who taught me to see my blackness as a mark probably ever learnt to see themselves as white. In our culture, whiteness is rarely marked in the indicative - there! there! - sense of my bracketed blackness. And that majoritar-

## WORDS OF THE WEEK



Pat Williams, left, professor of law at New York's Columbia University, was attacked for her views and verbosity when it was announced she was to be this year's Reith lecturer. Here is an extract from her first talk this week

ian privilege of never noticing oneself was the beginning of an imbalance from which so much, so much else flowed. But that is hard to talk about, even now, this insight acquired before I had the words to sort it out. Yet, it is imperative to think about this phenomenon of closeting race - which I believe is a good deal more widespread than these small examples. In a sense, race matters are resented and repressed in much the same way as matters of sex and scandal. The subject is considered a rude and transgressive one in mixed company - a matter whose observation is sometimes inevitable, but about which, once seen, little should be heard nonetheless. Race thus tends to be treated as though it were in a specially delicate category of social infirmity, so called, like extreme obesity or disfigurement. Every parent knows a little of this dynamic, if in other contexts. "Why doesn't that lady have any teeth?" comes the child's piping voice. "Why doesn't that gentleman have any hair?" and "Why is that little boy so black?" "Sehhh," comes the anxious parental remonstrance, "the poor thing can't help it. We must all pretend that nothing's wrong." And thus we are coached, upon pain of pun-

ishment, not to see a thing. Better be sure the parent faces an ethical dilemma in that moment of childish vision unrestrained by social nicety. On the one hand we rush to place a limit on what can be said to strangers and what must be withheld for fear of imposition, or of hurting someone's feelings. As members of a broad society, we respect one another by learning not to inflict every last intimate prying curiosity we may harbour upon everyone we meet. That said, there remains the problem of how or whether we ever answer the question, and that is the dimension of this dynamic that is considerably more troubling. "Why is that man wearing no clothes, mummy?" pipes the childish voice once more. And the parent panics at the complication of trying to explain. The naked man may be a nudist or a psychotic, or perhaps the emperor of the realm, but the silencing that is passed from parent to child is not only about the teaching of restraint, it is calculated to circumnavigate the question as though it had never been asked. "Stop asking such silly questions." A wall begins to grow around the forbidden gaze. For we all know - and children best of all - when someone wants to change the subject, and

for ever, and so the child is left to the monstrous creativity of ignorance and wild imagination. Again, I do believe that this unfortunate negotiation of social difference has much in common with discussions about race. Race is treated as though it were some sort of genetic leprosy or a biological train wreck. Those who privilege themselves as "unraced" - usually, but not always, those who are white - are always anxiously maintaining that it doesn't matter, even as they are quite busy feeling pity, no less, and thankful to God for their great good luck in having been spared so intolerable an affliction. Meanwhile, those marked as "having race" are ground down by the pendular stresses of having to explain what it feels like to be you - why are you black? why are you black? why are you black? - over and over again. Or alternatively, placed in a kind of conversational quarantine of muteness in which any mention of racial circumstance reduces all sides to tears, fears, fistcluffs and other purveys of unseemly anguish. This sad habitual paralysis in the face of the foreign and the anxiety producing. It is as though we were all skating across a pond that is not quite thoroughly frozen. Two centuries ago, or perhaps only a few decades ago, the lake was solidly frozen. And if, for those skating across the surface, things seemed much more secure. It was a much more dismal lot for those whose fates were frozen at the bottom of the pond. Over time, the weather of race relations has warmed somewhat and some few of those at the bottom have found their way to the surface. We no longer hold our breath and we have even learnt to skate. The noisy racial chasm still yawns darkly beneath us all but we few brave souls glide gingerly above upon a skim of hope. Our bodies made light with denial. The black pond so dangerously and thinly iced with conviction that talking about it will only make things worse. The Reith Lectures, 'The Genealogy of Race: Towards a Theory of Grace'. The next talk is 'The Paradox of Race', on Radio 4, Tuesday, 8.30pm

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Charming, upwardly mobile, but unfortunately a Nazi **page 7**

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# Relaxing in another dimension

A new style of jigsaw may be a refuge from daily stress, says William Hartston

Just suppose, for a moment, that you were looking for a pastime that provided a real antidote to the stresses of everyday life. First, it would have to be non-competitive – bridge, backgammon and chess are all very well as comparatively harmless outlets for our innate aggression, but they can hardly be described as therapeutic; and as for such ostensibly fun games as Cluedo or Monopoly, we all know how they can bring out the worst personality traits of the more determined practitioners.

So competitiveness is out, but we do need something that is both slow and absorbing in order to offer a complete break from real life and occupy our attention for long enough to wind down from everyday pressures. Finally, it has to be perceived as something worth doing, so must offer a satisfying goal to serve as a reward for the effort involved. And if that goal can be achieved by a number of people acting in co-operation, then all the better.

Dr Jenny Cozens, who is a clinical psychologist and Principal Research Fellow at Leeds University, has identified something that she believes may satisfy all the above criteria: jigsaws, preferably three-dimensional ones. Endorsing the new "Puzz 3D" range from Waddingtons, Dr Cozens says: "Completing puzzles can be beneficial to many people, but the sheer complexity of 'Puzz 3D' makes it mind-absorbing, which can be an antidote to stress."

Hang on a moment, though. Don't jigsaws fuel frustration and lead to tetchy outbursts? "Has anyone seen a green piece with a red line through it? I had it a moment ago on for goodness sake who's been knocking pieces on to the floor no don't put your cup down there you clumsy oaf now you'll just have to put all that corner together again now where's that green piece gone again?"

As Dr Cozens adds: "The benefits of 'Puzz 3D' may also depend on personality type – for example, practical people are often good at puzzles, while those who are planners rather than doers will benefit from the concentration the puzzle requires." The delayed gratification offered by jigsaws, slowly and tangibly working towards the final achievement of finishing the puzzle, makes it particularly good for the "sensing" people among Jungian personality types. In contrast to modern computer games, which provide achievement overload through an orgy of zapping and pouncing, the sedate pace of jigsaws can teach children patience. And not only children. In an increasingly fast-moving society, when even the traditionally relaxing lunch hour has fallen victim to the ever more demanding pace of life, Dr Cozens believes that we may



'The Pharaoh', computer-scanned by Really Useful Games and cut into 140 slices

all benefit from an activity that encourages patience and an appreciation of the joys of delayed reward. "We only have to go shopping to see how impatient we have all become," she says.

Whatever reservations we may have about computer games, however, the successful launch of two different ranges of three-dimensional jigsaws owes everything to recent technological improvements. The real puzzle, for Paul Gallant, the inventor of 'Puzz 3D', was to find a way to hold a three-dimensional jigsaw together without glue or pins. The solution came from the unlikely source of British Petroleum, which was certainly not thinking primarily of jigsaws when it produced just the right type of polyethylene foam to enable the puzzles to hold together at their dovetail joints.

"Sculpture Puzzles", the new range from Really Useful Games, owes its inspiration to computer scanning techniques. Three-dimensional objects, from works of art such as the Venus de Milo or Rodin's *The Kiss* to commonplace things such as a head or a clock, are scanned by a computer that can then produce a series of cross-sections that pile up to make the original object.

The jigsaws are intelligently designed to offer the puzzler a choice of levels of difficulty. If you just want to put it together, there are "cheat" numbers on every piece that

let you, after doing a simple sum, work out the order in which they should be placed on the central column. Although not mentioned by the manufacturers, this element can also be used as a sneaky way to encourage numeracy in children. Mixing sums with jigsaws seems a perfect way to get small children to practise their arithmetic. The serious jigsaw doer, of course, will ignore the numbers and just work by sight and feel to try to get them in the right order. Finally, for those who want a real challenge, several of the pieces may be broken into three, so that each level becomes a mini-jigsaw of its own. The final jigsaw-sculptures are quite stunning, making highly attractive ornaments in their own right.

The Dutch historian-philosopher Johan Huizinga, in his influential work *Homo Ludens*, wrote about the absolute sense of order offered by games through their clearly defined rules and delineation of playing areas: "Here we come across another, very positive feature of play: it creates order, is order. Into an imperfect world and into the confusion of life it brings a temporary, a limited perfection. Play demands order, absolute and supreme. The least deviation from it 'spoils the game', robs it of its character, and makes it worthless. The profound affinity between play and order is perhaps the reason why play... seems to lie to such a large extent in the field of aesthetics. It may be that this aesthetic factor is identical with the impulse to create orderly form, which animates play in all its aspects."

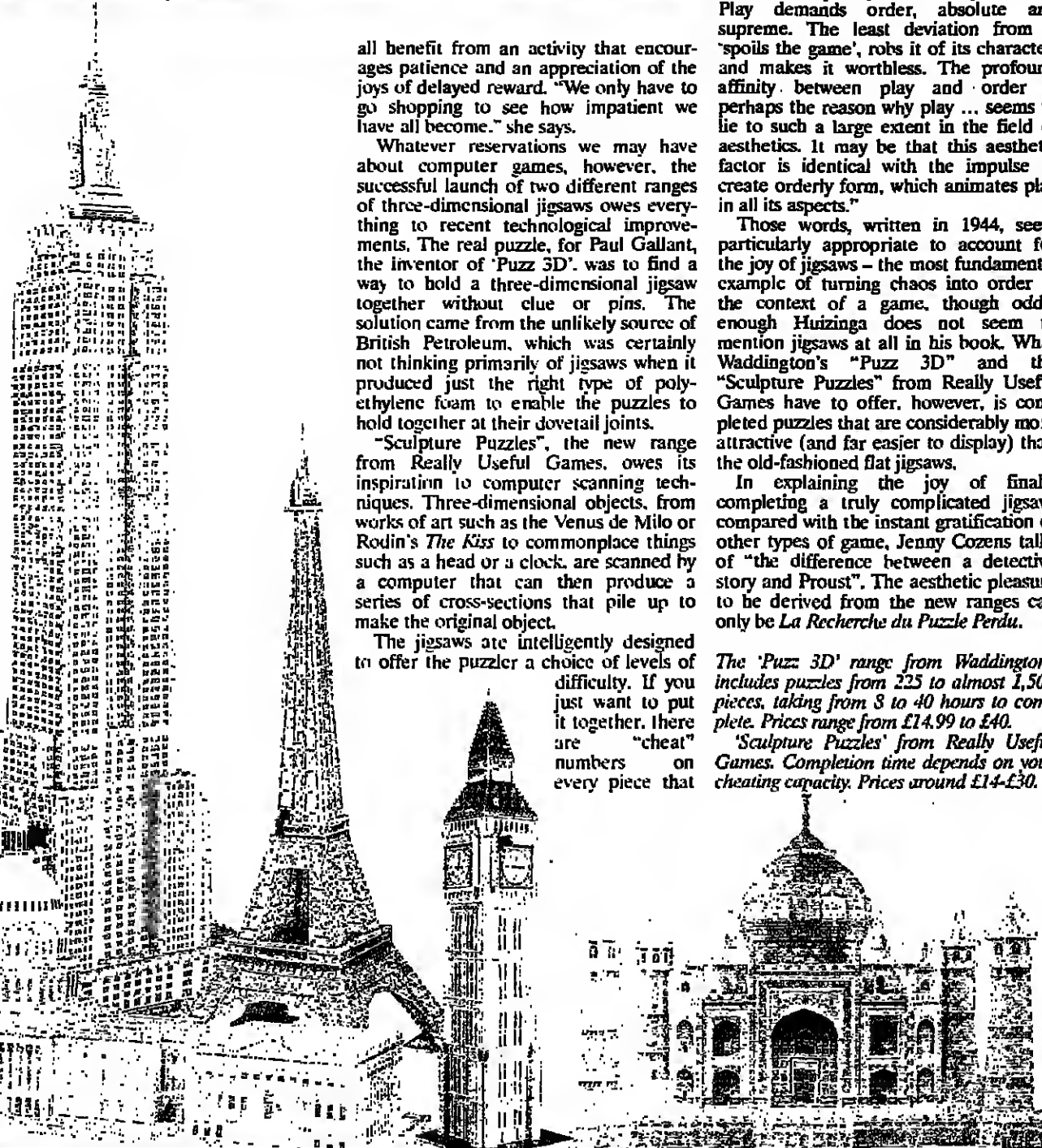
Those words, written in 1944, seem particularly appropriate to account for the joy of jigsaws – the most fundamental example of turning chaos into order in the context of a game, though oddly enough Huizinga does not seem to mention jigsaws at all in his book. What Waddingtons' "Puzz 3D" and the "Sculpture Puzzles" from Really Useful Games have to offer, however, is completed puzzles that are considerably more attractive (and far easier to display) than the old-fashioned flat jigsaws.

In explaining the joy of finally completing a truly complicated jigsaw, compared with the instant gratification of other types of game, Jenny Cozens talks of "the difference between a detective story and Proust". The aesthetic pleasure to be derived from the new ranges can only be *La Recherche du Puzzle Perdu*.

The 'Puzz 3D' range from Waddingtons includes puzzles from 225 to almost 1,500 pieces, taking from 8 to 40 hours to complete. Prices range from £14.99 to £40.

'Sculpture Puzzles' from Really Useful Games. Completion time depends on your cheating capacity. Prices around £14-£30.

Some items from Waddingtons' 'Puzz 3D' range (left to right): the US Capitol, the Empire State Building, the Eiffel Tower, Big Ben, the Taj Mahal. The scale reflects relative sizes of the buildings, not the puzzles. The 4ft-tall, 1,483-piece Big Ben is the most challenging



## Games people play

Pandora Melly finds fantasy in a mine-field

Nicholas Hills, 59, architect

I used to have my ears rubbed off in rugby scrums. I haven't played for 50 years, but my little son plays a bit. He's very good at running, preferably away from things. He's just won the 100 metres at his school sports day. It was quite thrilling to see the rivalry between him and his friend Cedric. There was torture and strain, and a breakdown by Cedric who went away and sulked, but I suppose that's all right at 11.

I am nearly 60, so I may be forgiven for not doing anything. It's not just age; I'm actually quite slow at things, which is why I'm working this evening instead of gallivanting off to the delights of Cromer or Norwich.

Cromer is famous for its lifeboat and shanty men. The lifeboat is always rescuing people; it's probably out in this weather; we're having tremendous gales.

When I was little I was somewhat isolated; it was the war, you see. I had two imaginary friends, Mrs Schlanks and Mrs

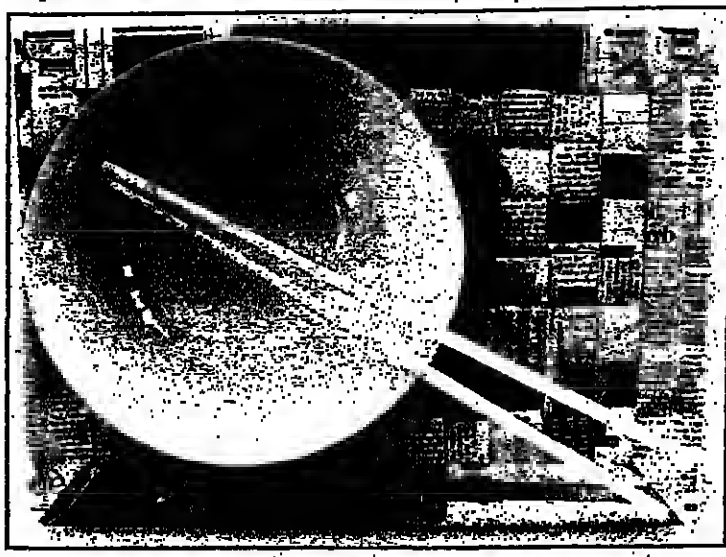
Schlanks, and they lived in a marionette tower. I'm sure you wouldn't want to know about them. Well, they were ladies, weren't they? I can hardly remember anything about them. How old would I have been then? Five perhaps, or six. Does anyone have imaginary people today?

They weren't very interesting, except that their tower was a real one on the other side of a mine-field. I remember when my mother went completely frantic one day because a small friend and I had walked some distance through this mine-field to go swimming. No one believes this, but when young, my mother and a wild friend of hers jumped from the top of the tower on to the shingle below. Why they weren't killed I don't know, but they really did jump.

Annual membership of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, 'Storm Force' for children, £5; 'Offshore' for sea-going members, £40, including quarterly journal. Details from RNLI (01202 663000).

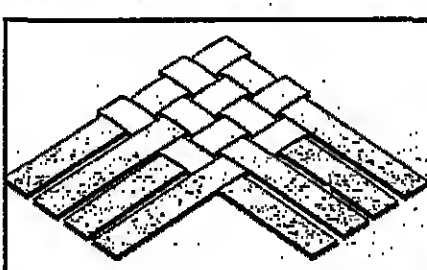
## Don't junk it... use it

A practical use for newspaper columns



I have found countless uses for the newspaper mat, which is today's example of creative recycling. All you need is an old newspaper, scissors and a stapler, though I have found that a metre-long metal ruler also helps to produce a more finished product.

You start by folding the sheets of newspaper into thick strips. Just roll them up from one end then squash flat, if you're feeling lazy, or wrap them tightly round a long ruler, then remove the ruler.



Having created a sufficient number of chunky newspaper columns, you can interweave them, as shown in the diagram, to form the body of the mat, trimming them to the required size.

A modification of the basic rolling technique is needed for the elegant borders. For these, you take your sheet of newspaper and roll it up from opposite edges until they meet in the middle. This is then folded over the edges of the woven section and stapled into place, both covering the loose edges and fixing the geometry of the entire object. Use broadsheet pages for a mat to protect your floor from the waste bin, Tabloid pages for spill-absorbent table mats, and last week's *The Eye* for individual place-mats.

Bawn O'Beirne-Ranelagh

The games page is edited by William Hartston

## Chess William Hartston

If you find yourself at a loose end in north London this weekend, you should drop in at the London College of Traditional Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (HR House, 447 High Road, Finchley N12) where three London grandmasters, Chris Ward, Keith Arkell and Neil McDonald, face three Chinese grandmasters, Wang Zili, Ye Jiangchuan and Feng Zaomin, in a challenge match between London and Peking. Until the Sixties, China did not participate in international chess. With their own Chinese Chess, as well as Go and other oriental board games, they showed little interest in the Western game. Chinese teams played in the Olympics of the late Sixties, but were seen more as a curiosity than a threat to the leading chess nations. Indeed it was not until 1974 that a Chinese player won a game against a grandmaster. I will remember the loser of that game, the urbane Dutch Grandmaster Jan Hein Donner, proudly maintaining: "Now I am the third most famous player in the world." Since his defeat would ensure that his name would be known throughout China, he reckoned that only Fischer and Spassky would be more famous.

In the Eighties, the Chinese became a real world chess power – but

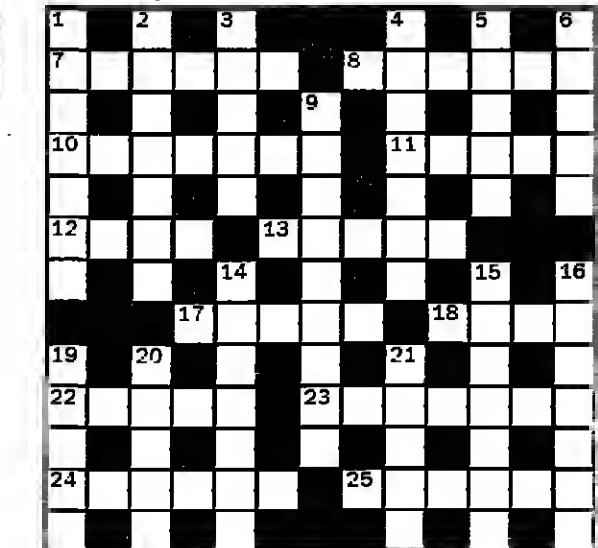
only in women's chess. Now their men are beginning to catch up. In the first round of the London-Peking match, the Chinese players, with the advantage of the white pieces on all boards, won 3-0. In the following game, Neil McDonald fell victim to an imaginative attack. After 27...Bg7, McDonald must have counted on 28.hg7+ Kh8 29.Bg3 when 29...f5! leaves him very much in the game. But when White spotted 28.Bxd5 29.Bxe6+! and 30.Rh3! Black was dead.

White: Ye Jiangchuan  
Black: Neil McDonald  
1 e4 e6 18 Bd3 Rf8  
2 d4 d5 19 Rf1 Nd5  
3 Nd2 c5 20 Bc4 Rad8  
4 exd5 Qxd5 21 Rd3 g5  
5 Bg3 Qxd4 22 Qd2 b4  
6 Bg4 Qd6 23 Rg3 h3  
7 0-0 Nf6 24 h3 Bf8  
8 Nh3 Ne6 25 Bc6  
9 Nbd4 Nxd4 26 h5 f6  
10 Nxd4 Bd7 27 hxg6 Bg7  
11 e3 Qe7 28 Bxd5 fxe5  
12 Qe2 Bc7 29 Bxe6+ Kh8  
13 Nh5 Qd6 30 Rh3 Bxe6  
14 Bf4 0-0 31 Nxe6 Rxd2  
15 Rad1 a6 32 Rxd7+ Kg8  
16 Nd4 Qc5 33 Rg7+ Kh8  
17 Be5 b5 34 Rh7+ 1-0

... On the other hand, if you find yourself at a loose end this afternoon in central London, the place to go (in suit and tie, please) is the RAC in Pall Mall where the Varsity chess match is taking place. This year, it's Oxford against Cambridge.

## concise crossword

No. 3235 Saturday 1 March



### ACROSS

- 7 Make secure (6)
- 8 Rowing crews (6)
- 10 Drain completely (7)
- 11 Building block (5)
- 12 Society (5)
- 13 Severe (5)
- 17 Causing irritation (5)
- 18 SE Asian language (4)
- 22 Large serving spoon (5)
- 23 Book collection (7)
- 24 Suitable for consumption (6)
- 25 Breakfast food (6)

### DOWN

- 1 Crime (7)
- 2 Narrow neck of land (7)
- 3 Happen again (5)
- 4 Collective settlement in Israel (7)
- 5 Professorial appointment (5)
- 6 Japanese city (5)
- 9 European capital (9)
- 14 Church tower (7)
- 15 Swindled (7)
- 16 Wheeled transport (7)
- 19 Having smooth, shiny coat (5)
- 20 Impromptu (2-3)
- 21 Monastery (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Cooper, 4 Burren (Kookburra), 7 Stranraer, 9 Rile, 10 Jont, 11 Smead, 13 Larn, 14 Nipper, 15 Sclott, 17 Seeped, 19 Pinet, 20 Jow, 21 Bone, 23 Granula, 24 Jukky, 25 Horrid, DOWN: 1 Corral, 2 Tanager, 3 Diphther, 4 Brou, 5 Waller, 7 Sicilian, 8 Soud, 9 Pigeon, 11 Smead, 12 River, 13 Select, 16 Inform, 17 Scotch, 18 Diga, 19 Bile, 20 Blot.

## Bridge Alan Hiron

Game all; dealer South

North	
♠ J 4	
♥ 8 5 2	
♦ A K 8 6 3 2	
♣ 7 3	
East	
♠ K 3	♠ 6 5
♥ K Q J 10 7	♥ 9 4 3
♦ 10 7 4	♦ J 9 5
♣ A J 5	♣ K 10 9 6 2
South	
♠ A Q 10 9 8 7 2	
♥ A 6	
♦ Q	
♣ Q 8 4	

South congratulated East on his smart defence against Four Spades on this deal. Dummy agreed with that, but refrained from sympathising with his partner. See if you can spot why. South opened 1♠ and West overcalled with 2♥. Not a shy bidder, North showed his diamonds at the Three level and South jumped to 4♠ against which West led ♥K. Declarer won, overtook his ♠Q on the table, and discarded his losing heart on the other top diamond. There was little point in taking

## Perplexity

"How many pigs do you keep on the farm?" I asked professor Swinefeaver. "You'll need brains to answer that," he replied. "All I can remember is that the number of pigs is divisible by three, it's a five-digit number and the digits are represented by the letters SWINE where BRAINS plus BRAINS equals ANSWER. So how many pigs did the professor keep on his farm? The first correct answer opened on 12

the trump finesse at this stage, for if the defenders did not want South to trump a losing club in dummy, they would have to lead trumps themselves. So South led a club from the table. This was East's chance to shine. He went in with his unprotected king and, when it held, switched to a trump. The finesse lost, West played another trump, and now there was no way for South to avoid losing two more clubs to go one off.

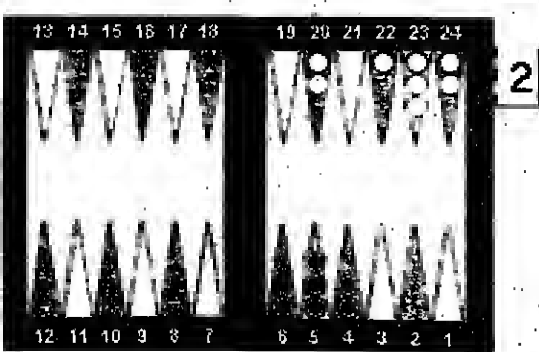
South's play would have worked if West had held both top club honours, even with the trump king wrong, but he missed a distinct improvement. After discarding his losing heart at trick three, he does better to ruff a diamond high and then lead clubs from hand. Now, if East wins and switches to a trump, declarer's finesses are established and, indeed, if West leads a second trump, both of South's remaining losing clubs go away on the diamonds. And, if the diamonds had not broken 3-3, there would still have been the trump finesse in reserve.

March will win a copy of the new Chambers 21st Century Dictionary: Answers to: Perplexity, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

15 February answers: Nectarines (inn creates), Tangerines (green satin), Grapefruits (furriest gap)

Winner: Mrs M Boyle (Consett)

## Backgammon Chris Bray



Unlike London, where the Double Fives club is the centre of the backgammon action, New York has four clubs open seven days a week. Some of the world's top players can be seen in action and at least one of the chouettes I saw there recently was played at \$500 a point. Players were required to have \$40,000 in cash to join in – certainly not for the faint-hearted.

Alan Steffen, who will be familiar to many for his victory in the 1984 British Championships, has just opened his new club, the Ace Point. Professionally and hospitably run by Alan and his wife Lourdes, it provides games for all levels of players. The next few positions will be taken from some of my games there. To start, what could be simpler than a bear-off? White is on roll in the position above. Should he redouble to 4? If he redoubles should Black take? On the pip count White leads by 21 to 29. Based on this alone, White should double and Black should drop. However, there are other factors to consider. White has eight men to bear-off, Black only six. White has an even number of men and a gap on his 4-point so if he rolls a number like 4,2 it will cost him a full roll (it will take him an extra roll to bear off his men). And if White, for example, rolls a 6, he will bear a man off the 5-point, thus "wasting" a pip. Black may reach a position where he can redouble. Most of these factors benefit Black, but is it enough to take the double? Should White wait a roll because he may roll a 4? This simple problem has suddenly become complex. There is a way to solve it and others like it, as we shall see next week. In the meantime decide whether you would double as White and take or drop as Black.

The Ace Point Club can be found at 41 East 60th Street (5th floor), New York 10022 (201-212-753-0842). Internet: adslmt@prodigy.net.





Lesley Garrett: 'I want to get rid of all the stereotypes and put people straight about what opera is... modern, interesting, believable, contemporary'

PHOTOGRAPH: GLYNIS GRIFFITHS

# The eager diva

If the list of Things To Avoid Doing In Life is headed by "Playing Poker with Men Called 'Doc'" and "Walking into a Soweto Bar and Shouting 'Boy!'", you'll find "Attempting to Patronise Lesley Garrett" pretty high in the batting order. Ms Garrett is a compact (5ft 4ins) lady from Doncaster with enormous grey-green eyes, an eagerly matey manner and a conversational style that's a cross between Edwina Currie and Bet Lynch, switching from hectoring to flirtatious. She is the best-selling female opera singer in the country, the principal soprano at the English National Opera and the most ubiquitous trained voice in the country. She also has a reputation for enthusiastic self-promotion. Not even Nigel Kennedy in his most Stradivarius-chewing, "almondsh" persona can hold a candle to Ms Garrett when it comes to self-publicity, whether it's being Gotha'd by Noel Edmonds, turning up on Esther Rantzen's sink of lachrymosity, *Hearts of Gold*, or appearing in a variety of plunging frocks on her album sleeves. Even if your interest in the classical repertoire began and ended with "Nessun Dorma", it's likely you've come across Ms Garrett's divine larynx without realising it: she has sung on a dozen TV ads, her voice fluting behind the earboud attractions of Ragù pasta sauce, Kenco coffee and the Renault 19 car.

A busy life, a life in the spotlights, the footlights, the best-seller charts. But Ms Garrett's celebrity has not, she says, been a smooth trajectory of acclaim. She's got there only by enduring the condescension of successive waves of horrible people: male chauvinists, Londoners, classical purists, opera directors, foreign directors, reviewers, prudes, the press... Nothing, in her headlong flow of conversation, was more heartfelt than the moments at which the word "patronise" surfaced. They reached a climax when she was talking about *Orpheus and Eurydice*, which

opens at the ENO on Monday with Ms Garrett playing Gluck's doomed, Hades-stranded heroine. The opera is choreographed and directed by Martha Clarke, "whom I love working with. Her currency is profoundly visual, she deals in texture, shape and colour, the way these things generate mood and emotion and therefore drama, but she leaves it to me to make the story, the drama, work. She doesn't feel she has to teach me, which is wonderful, it's so... not patronising."

Have you spent your life (I asked) being talked down to? "Argghhh!" Ms Garrett, who had been sitting cross-legged on a kelim footstool for the last hour, abruptly banged both fists on the material, releasing a cloud of Isfahan notes, and uttering a heart-breaking cry. "For being too Northern, too girlish, too tomboyish. For being too little, for being too sexy..."

One reason why some people refuse to take La Garrett seriously is her long-sustained crusade to bring opera to the people. Ever since 1989, when the ENO launched their meet-the-company corporate campaign with a huge photograph of Ms Garrett looking wanton in a long black dress, she has gone out of her way to demystify opera, to be Everyman's guide through the murky jungle of aria, recitative, coloratura and 20-minute death scene.

"I want to get rid of all the stereotypes," she says, "and put people straight about what opera is. You know the vast majority of people in this country still regard opera as elitist, highbrow, difficult to understand, full of enormous people screaming at each other in a foreign language; they think they'll have to watch stories they can't

relate to, being sung at prices they can't afford. I want to say, no, it's not like that, it's modern, it's interesting, it's believable, it's contemporary, and it's probably the biggest turn-on your imagination will ever have."

Phew. But why did she care whether people listened to music? Why did it matter if the majority of people in the UK never heard a single note by Gluck? "If they don't ever hear Gluck because of a misguided impression about the music, if they don't hear it because of a stereotype that they believe without ever questioning, if they don't ever hear Gluck because they imagine it will make them feel stupid - those are all things I abhor. Because it does matter. The wider everyone's artistic experience is, the better it makes you. It's part of the spiritual health of this country, and of our general well-being, to have as much exposure to as much art as possible."

Cynics might point to the 70,000 sales of Ms Garrett's album, *Soprano in Red*, and say that the more new listeners classical opera acquires, the more CDs the divine Ms G will flood. She deftly anticipates such criticism by turning the whole business of popularisation and promotion into a style statement. "It was with the ENO picture that I discovered how exciting it is to create publicity, and it's all part of the package; it's what I do. I find it fascinating to see what captures the public imagination. If you want classical music to have a future, you have to join the club and promote it, to compete with the audio-visual competition."

She readily admits the power of the image, even in the realm of music. "It was that picture of me in the ENO campaign that started my record career. I got a recording contract because of that picture, and I thought, 'Hey, this is powerful shit'. The voice came into it second. Of course it rapidly became the most important thing - I wouldn't have done it otherwise."

You could watch her bringing opera to the people via Harry Enfield's *Guide to Opera* a few years ago, and a documentary with the *Birds of a Feather* girls Pauline Quirke and Linda Robson. You might have caught a TV "special" devoted to her work entitled *Viva La Diva* in April 1995. Nobody could have tried harder to change the image of the prima donna from that of a neurotic and demanding termagant to a matey and

spoof. Did she approach it differently? "I approach all the roles in exactly the same way," she says with a trace of asperity. "I ask: what is this character about? What's been happening to her now, and what's she going to do next? It doesn't matter if it's comedy or tragedy, it's always people undergoing a profound emotional change. I approach them all very seriously. It's just that some of them have laifs, and some don't..."

Laffs, eh? Did she ever worry that the lighter side of her nature got in the way of her interpretations? She did her brilliant, aren't-I-incorrigible smile. "Yes it does come out all

never encountered the bubbly Ms Garrett in full flow, in her zip-fronted red fleece and Buck's Fizz hairstyle.

I wondered how she went down outside England. Had she considered, say, a Wagnerian career? "No, I've never worked in Germany, funny enough. Never been asked, though I'd love to have a go. I rise to challenges with monotonous regularity. I did actually go to Vienna recently, and it was miserable." Didn't they like her voice? "They must have because they asked me to go and sing. They had me in mind for a part in something. They'd heard my albums, so I brought a whole variety of things. And the boss of the opera house screamed at me that I'd brought the wrong material." Abruptly Ms Garrett became a minatory Brünnhilde. "We don't do zese songs in ziss house," he shouted, "Vy do you bring zese arias? I thought, my life's too short for this, so I just said, 'By-eee'..."

It all comes down to her childhood, about which she speaks with enormous warmth and animation. She grew up in Doncaster, where her father was a signmaster and autodidact. "He bought a tiny, derelict, dockside cottage by the side of a river just after I was born, did it up and we moved there and it was Paradise," she recalls. "Then, after my sisters were born, he realised he most wanted to work with children, and decided to be a headmaster. So he did a correspondence course in his signboard, and went around with a tape-recorder on his bike, and became head teacher at an infants' school, 'although he encountered a lot of sexual discrimination. It was pretty

unheard-of for a man to be in charge of tiny babies."

The family were, of course, egregiously musical, somewhere between the Partridge Family and the Von Trapps. "My father's a big opera fan - but there was a great variety of music around. Music wasn't a bobby of the family but of the whole area of south Yorkshire." What did her father sing? "He loved all Mario Lanza's stuff. And 'Danny Boy'. And the 'Miserere' from Verdi's *Il Trovatore*. That was a huge favourite, we sang that together a lot. It was wonderful to be so - uncluttered by television. We just had the radio and the piano. Mother sang and played the piano. And we didn't worry about compartments of music. I'd sing 'My Old Man Said Follow the Van', followed by Handel's *Messiah*, and not think anything about it. Then my father would write me a poem, and my mother would play some Bach on the piano. And my uncle would come round and play jazz on the saxophone. And I'd go to school and we'd do Benjamin Britten's *The Little Sweep*, and the next term we'd do *My Fair Lady*. It was completely normal to juggle them all together."

When she was 15, her Aunt Eileen took her to London for the first time and introduced her to showbiz, operatic and otherwise. "We went to a different show every night. I saw *Madam Butterfly* - I'd never seen an opera before. And a Tchaikovsky concert. I saw a musical called *1781*, which was extraordinary, and I went to *Abelard and Heloise*, which changed my life completely. Remembering how Diana Rigg (as Heloise) was loudly mocked for appearing sans clothing dur-

ing the play, I wondered if this had been the inspiration behind Ms Garrett's brief but notorious flash of naked bottom during a production of *Die Fledermaus*. "Something that amazed me when I whipped me kilt off was that the reaction was exactly the same as with Diana Rigg 20 years before - that is, ridiculous, over the top. As if the papers had learnt nothing in that time."

The most interesting hiccup in Ms Garrett's rise came in 1982, when her first marriage failed and her voice packed up completely. She couldn't sing, couldn't hold a tune, could hardly produce a note - "maybe a tone, that was all. I just couldn't do it. I got a few jobs and bummed around, but I was really frightened. I thought I'd blown it and lost it for good. There was apparently nothing wrong but I just couldn't remember how to sing." She went to her singing teacher to rebuild her whole range of notes (it took, she says, years) but also saw a shrink. "The idea was that I was probably riddled with guilt - that I'd left my husband to pursue my career - and had taken my voice away to punish myself. It all sounded a bit Californian, but it was interesting and I discovered a lot about my own resilience..."

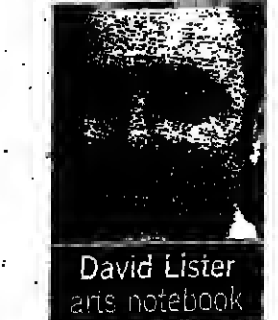
As she bustles about her large and airy house in the fashionable end of Highgate, where she lives with her second husband Peter and their children Chloe and Jeremy, it's hard to imagine this strong, unshakably optimistic woman being bothered by guilt. You get the impression she has learnt to handle psychological stresses with the same aplomb that she handles critics, opera house bosses and Viennese snobs. Lesley Garrett has become such a force of nature, in her music-for-all crusading, her spot-the-diva self-promotion, her popular albums of crossover songs, that you leave her with the impression of a woman endlessly forging ahead. As if stopping to think or to look back, might leave her, like Eurydice, becalmed in regions quite alien to her jolly spirit.

## John Walsh meets... Lesley Garrett

boydenish sexpot-next-door. But the downside of all this in-your-lap democratising was a suspicion in the mind of some commentators that Ms Garrett was a little too un-purist to be an authentic classical singer. I remarked that she'd played Eurydice at the ENO before, in Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld*, and that Gluck was a radically more stark and serious proposition than the operetta king's high-kicking

the time, whether I like it or not. It's just kind of there. There's no character in history that hasn't got a lighter side, that hasn't got some humour somewhere; but whether they're allowed to demonstrate it within the confines of the role is another matter." The wintry figures of Job, Metternich, Gladstone, Dostoyevsky and the Revd Ian Paisley hiegly wandered through my head, looking for their "lighter side" - but then they'd

Question: Which world leader is a closet movie buff? Answer: President Bill Clinton. That should relax America a little. After all, some of his predecessors have had far worse fetishes. It seems the President retires to his private movie theatre in the White House at least once a week, sometimes with the family. And his taste is a notch above the latest Hollywood fare. *Shine* was one private showing he raved about to friends, anticipating its critical acclaim.



David Lister arts notebook



*Sling Blade* is the story of a retarded Arkansas man released from an asylum for the criminally insane, to return against his will to society. Billy Bob Thornton, it should be explained, is the film's writer, director and star and was a surprise nomination for Best Actor in the Oscars. Before becoming an

actor, he did actually work on a Clinton highway crew in Arkansas, clearing brush, with a sling blade. Thornton, who still lives in Arkansas, remains friends with the President. His latest directorial venture is filming *Primary Colors*, the thinly disguised novel about Clinton's early days with a protag-

onist who was volatile and not always faithful to his wife. In a spirit of true southern friendship, Thornton consulted his chum in the White House to get his blessing before taking on the movie adaptation of the book. Their discussion remains private. But Thornton loyally admits to having "toned down the book a bit".

"So how did you get into acting?" just occasionally produces a memorable response. It did at a recent awards lunch when I was seated next to Ricky Tomlinson, the bearded Liverpudlian who gave a searing performance in Jimmy McGovern's TV dramatisation of the Hillsborough disaster, and who is shortly to star in the film *Mojo* alongside Harold Pinter in a rare screen role. Tomlinson told me that he was one of the Shrewsbury Three (an all-but-forgotten episode during the Heath government in which three building workers were jailed for illegal picketing in 1972). He was the shop steward and served two years in prison. When he came out he was blacklisted by the building trade and made his living doing stand-up comedy, something he had fantasised about in jail.

He still does regular stand-up to the accompaniment of his banjo and assorted hecklers, in Liverpool's Atlantic pub. He didn't have his first acting role until he was 40, and walk-on parts led eventually to roles in *Brookside*, *Cracker* and *Hillsborough*. Actor, wisecracker, banjo player and one-time political prisoner... why the chat show circuit hasn't discovered this guy is a mystery.

Lisa Anderson, the music industry consultant and eminence grise behind this week's Brit Awards, at least found that organising the bash this week did not cause her to throw up with nerves, as she has done on two occasions in her career. One was when she was appointed MD of RCA Records, the first woman to rise so high in the industry.



# arts & books

## Ins and outs of Scottish Highland dancing

Why isn't *La Sylphide* performed more often? Created in 1832 by Filippo Taglioni to showcase his daughter Marie's revolutionary pointe-work, the ballet was reworked in 1836 by the Danish romantic Auguste Bournonville and it is this version that usually survives today. Or does it? You can see it regularly in Paris or New York or Copenhagen, but this jewel of the romantic repertoire hasn't adorned the London stage since ENB last did it in 1989. Scottish Ballet are currently touring with a production that reminds us why this neglect is such a scandal.

The lean, two-act tale tells of James, a young Scottish bridegroom beguiled by a passing Sylph on the eve of his wedding. A local hag brews an enchanted scarf which James believes will bind the elusive Sylph to him - big mistake. Scottish Ballet has performed the work since 1973 and the current restaging is by the former Royal Danish ballerina Sorella Englund. On Wednesday, Johan Kobborg, a young Danish virtuoso, acted the role of James with eagerness and melancholy and danced it with a brilliance that few British dancers could match. His

**BALLET** *La Sylphide*, Woking; Highland Fling, The Place, London

partner was fellow guest Tamaru Rojo, who imbued the Sylph with a mixture of mischief and other-worldly innocence. The role of the vengeful crone Madge often degenerates into ham, but Sorella Englund conveyed the spite and menace of the character with an air of normality. Although eccentric, she would not be out of place at a Highland wedding - like a ghastly auntie who always gets legless but has to be invited. The corps formed Bournonville's sculptural ensembles - as deft and artful as a clutch of cherubs on a ceiling.

These treats seemed a tiny bit wasted on Woking. Wednesday's audience was thin and Kobborg's performance, which would have blown the socks off Covent Garden, was greeted with village-cricker applause. The boneheadedness of this response was highlighted by the knicker-wetting screams greeting the evening's other piece, Robert North's butch ballet *Troy Game*.

Manhew Bourne's 1994 version of *La Sylphide* might have gone down better. *Highland Fling* relocates the ballet to an

absurdly plaid pad in a Glasgow high-rise, and the Sylph is a grungy walf who symbolises the anarchic pleasures of James's chemical dependence. Her hands may be demurely crossed but they are pawing at her crotch.

The second act has worn better than the first. Bourne's five grubby sylphs show distinct flashes of what he would later achieve with his corps of male swans, and we glimpse the choreographer's ability to flip from farce to tragedy. Bournonville's Sylph dies as the baleful scarf enfolds her and the fairy wings drop from her waist. It's a terrible moment, but its full impact requires an audience in tune with the romantic sensibilities and able to appreciate the tragic loss of immortality. Bourne's Sylph dies when James, eager for gratification, bloodily amputates her wings, a *coup de theatre* that takes a short cut to our emotions.

*Highland Fling*: tonight, The Place, London WC1 (387 0031); then Wed-Sat, Midlands Art Centre, Birmingham (0121-440 3838). Scottish Ballet double-bill: 29 Apr-3 May: The Swan, High Wycombe (01494-512000); 20-24 May: The Lyceum, Sheffield (0114 276 9922)

## The reality myth

Paul Taylor catches a rare sight of 'Cymbeline' and 'Camino Real' at Stratford



Casanova meets the Lady of the Camellias: Peter Egan and Susannah York in 'Camino Real'

PHOTOGRAPH BY IAN KYLE

## Voices raised in protest - but ever so politely

Good idea in principle; naff in practice. For Wednesday's concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Women's Playhouse Trust had brought together a collection of women writers, composers, a visual artist, a director and sundry performers to create a contemporary response to the obscenity of war, racism, dispossession and displacement.

*Passages*, comprising 20 newly commissioned songs, was the result, performed end to end in two parts. But why should the effect have been so muted? Was it the dominating presence of an enormous, white, bed-like structure - slightly Ikea-style, but also reminiscent of Claes Oldenburg's soft sculptures - on which the five women singers swayed and tottered? Surely not the surface for angry protestation or passionate discourse. And the "politeness" of the OEH seemed so desperately at odds with the subject matter - isn't *Passages* a show for angry, empty warehouses where tickets are cheap and the communication simple? Two-foot-square programmes (at £4 a shot) do nothing but aggravate adjacent punters, and text that requires a magnifying glass is not best served by low lights. In the Stygian gloom, poets

**CLASSICAL** *Passages*, Queen Elizabeth Hall, London

and composers' names were impossible to decipher and poems impossible to read - hardly the stuff of earnest protest. For this seemed to be the problem - the basics, like the need to hear words, had all been forgotten. Time and time again, into a black hole went those words, a pity since the poets included some well-known names: Katie Campbell, Jackie Kay, Deborah Levy and Jo Shapcott.

The roll-call of composers - Ruth Brychmore, Jane Gardner, Priti Paintal, Roxanna Panufnik, Ilona Sekacz and Errollyn Wallen - should have provided considerable variation. But the final outcome, with scarcely an exception, was a deadening similarity. The estimable Endymion Ensemble, with whom the WPT has successfully collaborated in the past, provided a set sound - in the main jazzy - with clarinet/sax, percussion, piano/synthesiser, string bass/electric guitar, violin/viola and gamelan, which contributed to the monotony. Ilona Sekacz's "Eight Gallons of Water" (text by Katie Campbell) stood out for its melancholy, meandering round a slow

waltz, picked out on synthesiser, as four women sang to each other atop the bales of the bed, like some perverse haystack.

"This Little Piggy" by Joac Gardner, again to a text by Katie Campbell, attempted to harness the terror and dislocated pain of confrontation with faceless bureaucracy: Jenny Miller was a touching propellant. "The Old Nag Explains Herself" (text by Jo Shapcott, music by Ruth Brychmore) seemed heartfelt, but what was being sung? "Shit In Her Eyes", by the most gifted of the crowd, Errollyn Wallen, to a text by Deborah Levy, began the second half, raunchily sporting Angie Brown in high-energy rock mode. But lit in red? A little clichéd, perhaps. And what standard props: battered suitcases, battered shoes, black trenchcoats, white headscarves. Here was tabloid politics, heretofore of satire, lacking in bite, a cry too far from the bitter worlds of Weill, Eisler or Shostakovich.

Wafii Kani conducted; Jules Wright directed; other (able) singers were Ann-Marie Sands, Lynne Davies, Tinnu Olafimihan, Angie Brown and Hyacinth Nicholls.

Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and Tennessee Williams' *Camino Real* are not the sort of plays that cause stampedes to the box-office, so, with the opening of both this week in Stratford, the RSC can't be accused of playing safe with repertoire. Towards the end of the Williams, one of the characters is moved to allude to the famous TS Eliot line that "Humankind cannot bear very much reality". After seeing these two works on consecutive evenings, you feel that it is humankind's capacity to tolerate unreality that has been diligently tested.

A virtuoso exercise in total incongruities and discrepant emotional extremes, *Cymbeline* juxtaposes the wildly improbable and the piercingly heartfelt, the beautiful and the grotesque. This is pushed to the limit in the scene where the heroine Imogen, believed dead, is laid next to a decapitated corpse. When she comes round, the clothes trick her into thinking that this grizzly object is her husband. The audience knows that it is, in fact, her oafy, ridiculous step-brother. Cloten, so her speech of stricken recognition is delivered in a context pregnant with black, bad-taste comedy.

The greatest asset in Adrian Noble's main-stage production at Stratford is Joanne Pearce, who, in the role of Imogen, has the flexibility to present her at some moments with a kind of warm, playful detachment and, at others, with a stunning emotional raptness.

In this heavily cut version of the play, pre-tenessee Williams Britain and the Rome with which she is in conflict over tributes have been given a strongly oriental look - Two Little Maids from School meet the *Seven Samurai* in a bare blue box within which a huge, sail-like white sheet is raised and lowered to define the various locations. Characters trip on and off via a ramp that extends down one of the aisles. Notwithstanding all this distancing exoticism, *Cymbeline*'s lost sons - played with a droll, artful artlessness by Richard Cant and Jo Stone-Fewings - speak with the broad Welsh accents of the wilds where they've been reared.

Noble makes the complicated proceedings unusually clear - the mind-knotting expository dialogue between the first and second gentlemen at the start has been recast and reduced to a scene-setting narrative told by the soothsayer to a nomadic tribe sitting round a flaming dish. This puts the production on the right fable-like lines. Shades of the Victorian pantomime villain are perhaps evoked too strongly in Paul Freeman's smooth dastard of a Iachimo, but Guy Henry interestingly turns Cloten into an effete class-conscious dimwit who - in a way that is almost pathetic - knows deep-down that he is a born loser.

Tennessee Williams once revealed that he got the germ of *Camino Real* from the sudden fear he briefly experienced, as he watched a torch-carrying procession in

Mexico, of Dying in an Unknown Place. In *Camino Real*, that place has become thoroughly mythical: a desiccated, out-of-time, central American coastal town, with a desert beyond its ancient walls. Stranded here are a group of romantic non-conformists from history and literature, who are all presented as well past their sell-by dates (they include Casanova, Marguerite Gautier, Don Quixote and Lord Byron). They are joined by another has-been, Kilroy, an American vagrant who was once a champion boxer but who has had to ditch his career because his heart is "as big as the head of a baby".

Darrell D'Silva brings Kilroy engagingly to life in Steven Pimlott's atmospheric, bustling, and endless-seeming production. But, as a play about the fate of the romantic in modern society, the piece can only offer an inert allegorical conflict between characters who have an unearned poignancy by virtue of their contrived temporal position and caricature baddies.

Moving performances from Susannah York as Marguerite and Peter Egan as Casanova did not prevent the experience of watching this long and heavy-handed play from feeling like a chore. It's the kind of work you can enjoy the virtue of having seen. Once.

*'Cymbeline' is at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre; 'Camino Real' at the Swan. Both in rep. Booking: 01789 295623*

## NEXT WEEK IN THE INDEPENDENT

**MONDAY DEEPAK CHOPRA**  
the richest guru in the West. Has Hillary Clinton and Michael Jackson in his thrall but not our new interviewer Deborah Ross



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ON THE ARTS PAGES THIS WEEK  
Interviews with Rostropovich, Anthony Minghella and Luther Vandross

THE INDEPENDENT  
IT IS...ARE YOU?

STEPHEN VAUGHAN			
	THE FILM	THE PLAY	THE EXHIBITION
	The Portrait of a Lady	King Lear	Louis Corinth
overview	Jane The Piano Campion directs Nicole Kidman, John Malkovich, Barbara Hershey and Martin Donovan in a big-budget, glossy adaptation of Henry James's 1881 novel of Americans abroad in which the innocent Isabel Archer rejects suitors only to marry a fortune-hunter. Cert 12, 144 mins, at the Lumiere, London WC2 and across the country	Ex-Theatre Clwyd director Helena Kaut-Howson goes to Leicester (where Lear is buried) for Shakespeare's cross between a state-of-the-nation play and a domestic tragedy with Theatre de Complicite's Marcello Magni and Kathryn Hunter as the king. At the Leicester Haymarket, (0116-253 9797) to 15 March	Canvases, etchings and drawings in a long overdue retrospective of Louis Corinth (1858-1925), who fell in and out of favour with the German authorities, was a pioneer of German Impressionism and whose work also straddles Symbolism, Realism and Expressionism. At the Tate Gallery, London SW1 (0171-887 8008) until 5 May
critical view	Adam Mars-Jones declared it not "the shining success that might have been hoped for... a gifted director has lost her grip on a mightily elusive novel." "Frustrating. Punctuated with greatness... it meanders through its narrative corridor like a blind man - oblivious to the human dramas going on around it," ummed the <i>Standard</i> . "She takes a poor departed author and tries to shake his work into a polemical life it never had and a psychological hindsight it would never have sought," admonished the <i>FT</i> . "As cinematically intelligent as it is faithful to the original... immensely assured," yelped <i>Time Out</i> .	Paul Taylor, a Kathryn Hunter fan, was grievously disappointed by the production, set in a bleak, modern nursing home with Hunter offering, "as mannered and distancing an impersonation of male old age as Clive Dunn's used to be in <i>Dad's Army</i> ." "Though <i>Lear</i> is a big enough play to withstand Kaut-Howson's inane attentions, it's often a close-run thing," seethed <i>The Telegraph</i> . "Hunter's performance is strong enough not to demand any framing apology... but she is imprisoned by the concept," chastised <i>The Guardian</i> . "Play and production fail to gel... the play needs depth, not show," snorted <i>The Times</i> .	Tom Lubbock was enraptured by the late works: "When you come to these, you see the point of Corinth. The preceding work becomes interesting mainly because it's by the man who did these." "If not a great master in absolute terms, certainly a... maverick whom even the British should admire," opined the <i>Standard</i> . "Will ensure that his stubbornly individual achievement is honoured in Britain at last," admired <i>The Times</i> . "Inviting waywardness... some flashes of real painterly invention, and an awful lot of unconvincing painterly bluster," complained <i>The Sunday Times</i> . "So many trumpling grandiosities," spluttered <i>The Observer</i> .
our view	Very beautiful but the poster looks like Kidman has a headache, which says a lot.	Hunter succeeds towards the end of the play but the production never takes wing.	It's worth going round backwards to recognise the strength of the later, greater works.

مكتبة من الأصل



# The best seat in the house

David Benedict asks Simon Curtis, chief producer of BBC2's *Performance* season, to name five good reasons why staying in is the best way of getting to the theatre

It's like *Opal Fruits*: the cast lists alone are made to make your mouth water. Fiona Shaw, Donald Sinden, Adrian Lester, Sheila Gish, Mandy Patinkin, David Bamber, John Sessions... directors such as Deborah Warner, Roger Michell and Sam Mendes aren't exactly small fry either. Were this a theatre season there would be a glamorous press launch and a box office advance you could retire on but, unless you are a *Radio Times* junkie, you probably know nothing about it.

"It does aggravate me that Ian Holm does a *Performance* play, and nobody says a word; then three weeks later he opens at the National, and gets two pages in *The Evening Standard*. I don't quite understand that," Simon Curtis, executive producer of the BBC *Performance* season of stage plays on television, is a benign man but there's an altogether reasonable level of irritation beneath the surface.

Curtis's problem stems from the peculiar relationship between theatre and TV. You only have to watch the Olivier Awards, replete with lifeless, hurriedly taped clips from the hits, to realise that theatre on TV is a dodgy game. The lighting looks flat, the camera excludes reactions from others on stage and performances never conceived for the ruthless eye of the camera are thrust into close-up. Cross-cultural mixing may be the stuff of post-modern life, but high culture in a low culture art form often ends up looking like the worst of all possible worlds.

Classical music has it easy. Televising orchestral concerts is a cinch by comparison. The visuals are usually a complement to good music from a good seat and, with decent camera set-ups, the opportunity to see a conductor at work rather than staring at flapping coat tails is a bonus. On the other hand, most opera broadcasts degenerate into "Event TV": thrill to Domingo in the comfort of your own home. It's a case of never mind the quality, feel the occasion.

The costs of creating opera in the studio are generally prohibitive, which means live broadcasts from vast stages. In technical terms, the frankly unsightly physical exertion of singing and the fact that few singers are likely contenders for Best Actor nominations renders close-ups almost impossible. All of which gives you static camera work, disengaging long-shots and largely unsatis-

factory results. Fine for fans, but unlikely to hook the casual viewer.

Theatre is more malleable but there's a chasm between those in TV who believe that classics can and should be screened for the millions who never make it into the theatre, and those who can imagine nothing worse. The former camp underestimates the formal difficulties, while the latter cites the generally stodgy BBC Shakespeare seasons or the stage *Play of the Month* slot of yesteryear, rightly asserting that they made for second-hand theatre and third-rate television. That group cannot have tuned into such triumphs as Anthony Page's masterly screen version of *Absolutely Hell* that led to a major National Theatre revival with many of the same cast. Nor can they have been part of the audience of two million entranced by Juliet Stevenson in *A Doll's House* or Zoë Wanamaker and Colin Firth in DH Lawrence's *The Widowing of Mrs Holroyd*.

If these highlights from previous series are anything to go by, tonight's opening of the sixth *Performance* season should be worth staying in for. Anyone who has ever considered a committed relationship is in for a provocative evening on the settee watching the intimate Donmar Warehouse production of Stephen Sondheim and George Furth's startling musical, *Company*. Kevin Elyot's heart-breaker *My Night With Reg* hits the screen on 15 March, closely followed by Fiona Shaw repeating her controversial performance as Shakespeare's Richard II. Henry Goodman and Margot Leicester as the Jewish couple whose lives are torn apart by guilt in Arthur Miller's *Broken Glass* complete the quartet of West End triumphs coming to a TV screen near you. Four theatrical sensations, plus Penny Woolcock's *Macbeth on the Estate*, an adaptation of Shakespeare filmed on location in Birmingham. Dead cert?

"People say: 'The reason your plays work is that they're great plays, you're not taking risks.' By that token," Curtis says, "every Shakespeare production at the RSC would be a success." It's true. Great ingredients don't necessarily make the perfect meal. On paper, John Malkovich, Miranda Richardson and Kate Nelligan in Pinter's powerfully static *Old Times* should have scorched the sofa. Instead it remained frozen. The trouble with televising Pinter is that his elliptical dialogue flattens out into TV naturalism and the highly



As seen on TV: Fiona Shaw repeats her controversial performance as Richard II on 15 March

charged atmosphere that floods the auditorium like dry ice stops dead at the lens.

Curtis, who came from the Royal Court to create *Performance*, has formed his guidelines on the job. "I learned pretty quickly that Ibsen works better the Chekhov. Ibsen is structured out unlike a soap opera with very intense, two- or three-handers, but the beauty of Chekhov is the ensemble which the camera can't capture. It selects. You think, 'Why are we looking at that when I want to be over there or watching those two?'" Then there's the problem of pacing. "Theatre plays almost always begin incredibly slowly. In *Hedda Gabler* there's 25 minutes, the length of a whole soap episode, before *Hedda* appears. Theatre writers are allowing the audience to get comfortable, to get used to the world. Television is about grabbing the audience immediately or they'll go. I'm always in favour of a director trimming but that's tricky."

He believes that quiet, intense, emotional

moments work best, rather than trying to capture big coups de théâtre. *Company* marks a departure, having been shot in the theatre, but it fits his criteria. "It's at its best when you just see Adrian Lester sitting on a chair singing a fantastic song in close-up." That exposing of emotions is what makes *My Night With Reg* so remarkable. Roger Michell takes the original ensemble cast who know each other and the subtext inside out and places the camera at the heart of the emotional cross-currents. On stage it was a hilarious and painful play about the lies people tell. On screen it becomes a profoundly moving exploration of the truths they hide.

As BBC2 slides relentlessly down-market - witness the axing of *Moving Pictures*, television's finest film programme and the arrival of such burning subjects for *Late Review* as *The First Wives Club* - isn't *Performance* under threat from the ratings-chasing ethos? "I never ever had any worries at all from the powers-that-be about audiences. They just want it to be quality work. In this little strand

there is still that belief that the BBC should do work that some people will enjoy. That doesn't have to be a jackpot thing."

None the less, Curtis isn't living in an ivory tower and he keeps an eye on ratings and TV names. An appropriate sitcom actor could bring him a 10th or a 20th of the *Only Fools and Horses* audience. "That's the equivalent of an awful lot of nights in a theatre. I do everything I can to draw attention to the work and make it as accessible and popular as possible and then pray to God that the film on BBC1 isn't too good that night. One of my favourites was Paddy Chayevsky's *The Mother*. We had Anne Bancroft. It was the first time the play had ever been revived and it went out on the night of the first ever Lottery draw. We were dead in the water. That's the problem with TV. I've learnt not to care about audience figures. It's a crap shoot."

*Company* opens the new *Performance* season: 8.30 tonight, BBC2

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## The singing will never be done

'Another Orpheus sings again, and loves, and weeps, and dies' - thanks to Messrs Monteverdi, Gluck and Haydn. By Nick Kimberley

We are in the gym of a disused inner-city school. A basketball court is marked out, a dozen or so players in everyday clothes take up positions. Is it a team formation for some exotic new form of the game? Suddenly they begin an odd ritual, like throwing seed. While they sow, they sing. Stranger still, facing them across the court is a harpsichordist.

What is unfolding is a scene from Monteverdi's *Orfeo*. This could be from one of those trendy po-mo productions in which baroque formality is juxtaposed with the debris of contemporary

urban life. In fact, it's a rehearsal for a new Kent Opera staging, and the gym is not scenery, simply a rehearsal room. When the production reaches the stage, there will be no inner-city flossian. Still, Orpheus remains a figure for our times, whose natural habitat is opera. Over the coming weeks we have the chance to compare and contrast different versions of the tale from the first two centuries of operatic history: Kent Opera's *Orfeo* (premiered in Mantua, 1607); a new English Opera production of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Vienna, 1762); and, in both

staging of the Monteverdi: "The myth is so succinct in its representation of the power of music, encapsulated in the idea of Orpheus being able to move stones and charm animals. Then we come to Monteverdi's opera, which asks 'Can music defeat death?' and it answers, 'In a way, yes: not physically, but in another way.' Monteverdi's ending has had a bad press, suggesting that it's a Hollywood-style happy ending tacked on because the 'focus group' didn't like the original. But, in the opera, the Bacchantes would be a distraction. It's not relevant to the themes of the piece that a group of women should come in and tear Orpheus to pieces. That's a myth about denying the sexual imperative; it's not what interests me here, nor did it interest Monteverdi. His point was to emphasise what music achieves."

Meanwhile, at ENO, director Martha Clarke has been grappling with Gluck's "problem" ending. For her, "The myth is more interesting and I had a day of being enchanted with the idea of going against the music, of making the ending dark. Then I realised I was pushing it too far and getting frightfully arty." Jane Glover, conductor of the ENO performance, goes further: "I don't think Gluck liked the happy ending any more than the rest of us. You have a feeling that, after the *coup de théâtre* where Amor returns Euridice to life, the composer hands the reins to the choreographer and says, 'OK, you finish it,' and that's why the opera ends with a sequence of dances."

Surprisingly, it is Haydn's opera that comes closest to the myth: Euridice dies; Orpheus is poisoned by the Bacchantes. As Christopher Hogwood, the conductor of the new Decca recording, remarks: "It must have been a real challenge for Haydn, writing his first opera for London, the world's musical centre, to end it with both main characters dead, a whimper, a long drum roll and lots of D minor. In fact, some people have wondered whether the opera is really finished, whether perhaps we're missing

a fifth act with a happy ending."

Not that Hogwood is suggesting that their happy endings somehow compromise the operas by Gluck and Monteverdi: "Opera lives from minute to minute, and you can go the full way emotionally with either opera while knowing that, at the end, there's going to be this little rescue act by Apollo or Amor." Some recent stagings of the two works have enacted the Bacchic dismemberment in mime while the music offers the *lento* fine that operatic convention demanded. Hogwood believes that Haydn's opera resists any such stylisation - one reason why it remains a rarity: "Modern producers find it hard to accept Haydn's conventions. You can't transpose a Haydn piece like this to Harlem, you can't have the heroine high on drugs, you can't have them all in boxer shorts and skateboards. So it poses problems for producers who can't take theatrical ventures on their own terms, and very few can."

Neither Kent nor ENO are offering modern-dress stagings, nor are they striving for cod baroque or Arcadian pastoralism. As Tim Carroll says, "Monteverdi's opera is a piece about mankind, and it requires a sense of 'ancientness' only inasmuch as it provides a feeling of continuity, that this has always been the case. It's a question of trying to create a world that has the texture of being connected to the earth, of happening in a real place to real people. That's the genius of this opera: it's absolutely emblematic, and at the same time absolutely human."

It's also a work that draws its power largely from its vocal lines. Although he's an early music specialist, Kent Opera's conductor John Toll is less concerned with authenticity than with expressivity: "I wanted voices that were - can I use the word? - unspoilt. Singers get precious about the voice as an instrument, and so lose an intuitive, spontaneous response to text. The expressive force of a voice is generated by text, and that's particularly essential here, where

Monteverdi is searching for a natural way of imitating speech through music. A highly stylised and oratorical speech, no doubt, but using music to boost its emotional force."

ENO's Orfeo is the counter-tenor Michael Chance, perhaps the world's leading interpreter of the role - at least in the original 1762 version of Gluck's opera, written for the castrato Guadagni (Gluck later revised the part for high tenor, while most modern stagings compromise on a mezzo in drag). Now, says ENO conductor Jane Glover, are they "corrupting" the original text with any of the music from later versions: "If you're going to do the 1762 version, then do it. People may say, 'Where's that lovely flute part? Where's the

*Dance of the Blessed Spirits?* But forget that those things have ever been there, and the piece unfolds in an incredibly tight way. It's so strong, we're running it without an interval."

Martha Clarke, best known as a choreographer, is using a complement of dancers, not as ornament but as what she calls "the colour-field of Orpheus's emotional journey."

"The opera is tremendously pure, so the production is simple and stark. My own direction in choreography is towards the theatrical gesture that emerges from natural movement, rather than anything based on traditional technique. What I've been trying to do is to find a common language, to merge the vocabularies of singers and dancers,

so that you look at them and you can't tell who is doing what: the dancers are part of the community of Orpheus."

The community of Orpheus is a large one, embracing all opera, and all singers. Opera may have dismembered the myth for its own purposes but, as these three variants show, that dismemberment can never stop Orpheus from singing.

Monteverdi: 7.30 tonight, 3pm Sun. Theatre Royal, Margate (01843 208877), 7.45 Thu. QEH, SBC, London (0171-960 4242) and touring. Gluck: from Mon, 8pm ENO, London Coliseum (0171-632 8300). Haydn: LPO concert performances, 7pm 20, 25 March QEH (as above); Hogwood recording on Decca/L'Oiseau Lyre (452 668-2)

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## Seriously comic

Charles Shaar Murray explores a graphic dream world

The Sandman: the wake  
by Neil Gaiman.  
Titan Books, £19.99

Is Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* the greatest comic book of all time? In your dreams. Those who still consider Norman Mailer a major figure in American cultural life should know that he provided *Sandman* with a blurb from heaven. "Sandman," the Great Man asserted in a widely-circulated print-hic, "is a comic strip for intellectuals, and I say it's about time."

So caveat lector! After all, we have no way of knowing whether Mailer has read any comics since his days in the US Army over half a century ago. Successive generations of intellectuals have lavished praise on successive generations of comics: the allusive surrealism of George Herriman's *Krazy Kat*, the lucidating political satire of Walt Kelly's *Pogo*, the innovative graphic ingenuity of Will Eisner's *Spirit*, the sheer vitality of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's original batch of Marvel Comics superheroes, and the scabrous confessionalism of Robert Crumb. More recently, Art Spiegelman's Holocaust fable *Maus*, Frank Miller's breathtaking redefinition of Batman, *The Dark Knight Returns*, and Alan Moore's devastating critique of the superhero, *V for Vendetta*, have all attracted attention far beyond the confines of the traditional comics ghetto.

However, nothing produced in the field during the past ten years has come close to the crucial combination of popular and critical success achieved by Gaiman's *Sandman* series. Uniquely among high-selling comics titles, this is a strip primarily concerned with ideas. *Sandman* is a story about story, a myth about myth, a postmodern metafiction with word balloons. "If

this isn't literature," Peter Straub wrote defiantly in an afterword to the *Sandman* collection *Brief Lives*, "nothing is."

Between 1988 and 1996, the *Sandman* comic ran for 75 monthly issues – not to mention the odd special or spin-off – and was collected into ten "graphic novels". The last of them, *The Wake*, is published this week. By the time the title was wound down – at the author's behest – *Sandman* had accumulated a formidable shelf of awards, was selling over a million copies a year, and had a *Who's Who* of fantasy and horror writers (Stephen King, Gene Wolfe, Clive Barker, Ramsey Campbell) queuing up to sing its praises.

Yet *Sandman*'s beginnings were inauspicious. In a comics world dominated by fights in tights, the primary assets are titles and characters rather than artists or writers. Editors seek ways to revamp obscure or faltering characters. The original *Sandman* was a 1940s no-hoper disinterred from the mouldering pages of *Justice Society of America*: a Bruce Wayne-like millionaire playboy in trenchcoat, fedora and mask, who fought crime by putting villains to sleep with a gas-gun. Unfortunately, he had an identical effect on readers.

DC Comics editor Karin Berger therefore risked little when she handed the poor schlub over to Neil Gaiman (a personable English pop-culture hack) for updating. Gaiman repaid her perception: in a major coup, he transformed the dulldest excuse for a superhero ever to waste woodpulp into the dread figure of Morpheus, Lord Of Dreams – the Prince of Stories himself.

Gaiman's *Sandman* was nothing less than a personification of the human imagination. His saga was described by one critic as "a secret history of the unconscious". Mor-



'Black wind blowing across our hearts': the archetypal figure of Despair in 'The Wake' G C COMICS/TITAN

pheus – aka Dream, or Oneiros – is one of the archetypes who call themselves The Endless, the others being Destiny, Despair, Desire, Delirium (who used to be Delight) and Destruction (who retired in the 17th century because humans no longer needed him). Dream is a tall, pallid figure with a shock of black hair, somewhat resembling The Cure's Robert Smith, minus the lipstick, after being thoroughly stretched on a rack. His realm is The Dreaming, an ever-changing Gormenghast-like castle surrounded by nebulous landscapes; it's where we go when we dream.

Morpheus has absolutely no sense of humour. Fortunately, his elder sister Death (who nevertheless looks younger) does. An adorable punkette with an irredeemably optimistic outlook, she incongruously became many readers' favourite. Her solo story, *Death: The High Cost Of Living*, will be filmed with a screenplay by the author.

Gaiman is an omnivorous reader and a formidable researcher. *Sandman* is packed with pastiche, allusion and greater and lesser arcania of all descriptions. Historical figures such as William Shakespeare, who appears as himself here in two key tales based on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the *Tempest*, rub shoulders with the fictional creations of others, some derived from the repertory company of DC's own comics; others from the entire tapestry of human myth.

The many hands who have illustrated the strip over the past eight years have borrowed the appearances of a variety of notables. Lucifer, the Fallen Angel, is the young David Bowie; Delirium resembles the avant-garde novelist Kathy Acker, and Fiddlers' Green, a place in The Dreaming which decided to get up and walk, does so as G K Chesterton.

The most consciously literary mass-market comic strip ever,

*Sandman* finally counts as a conditional triumph. As is appropriate for a dream about dreams, *Sandman* is gossamer-thin, not always able to support the weight of the symbolic anvils Gaiman places upon it. The strip rarely stops winking at the reader, and even at its grimmest and goriest it remains oversweet. Gaiman's weakness remains the cuteness demonstrated in his overblown novel and TV series *Neverwhere*. But even if *Sandman* isn't the greatest comic of the century, it is good enough to demand to be judged by those standards.

Before *Sandman*, the Lord of Dreams had no dreams of his own: the Prince of Stories lacked a tale. Neil Gaiman has remedied that. *The Wake* is a sober, sombre conclusion – literally, a dying fall – to a sequence that undeniably constitutes a major achievement. There is nothing quite like it anywhere else.

## Charlotte the Obscure

Michael Arditti on the poet who might have said "kiss me, Hardy"

His Arms are Full of Broken Things by P B Parris, Viking, £16

To most contemporary readers, Charlotte Mew is Charlotte Who, the unfortunate rhyme emphasising the fate of a poet who was never admitted into the canon of great literature and is now rarely even allowed through the journeyman's door. And yet, as the epigraphs to P B Parris's fictionalised biography make clear, Thomas Hardy revered her while Siegfried Sassoon declared her the equal of Emily Brontë.

With one major exception, Parris's fictional life sticks very closely to the factual account in Penelope Fitzgerald's admirable *Charlotte Mew and Her Friends*.

Her book is a first-person variant on Fitzgerald's third-person narrative, from the opening incident (the arrival of a doll's house designed by her architect father), to her final words ("Don't keep me. Let me go"). Even tiny details are the same, such as Charlotte banging her head against a wall when her beloved teacher retires, her adult voice veering as erratically as an adolescent boy's, and Frederick Rolfe leaving lice on chairs.

Mew's life was more deeply rooted in domesticity than even Stevie Smith's, and Parris vividly portrays the world of an upper-middle class family whose social position was threatened not only by poverty but by insanity.

Two of Mew's siblings were incarcerated in asylums and both she and her remaining sister, Anne, swore never to marry (in Charlotte's case this was clearly a way of rationalising her repressions). Although Parris describes her visit to Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, Mew's own drama was closer to the guilty secrets and hereditary curse of Strindberg's *Ghosts*.

Parris's chief invention is a romance between Charlotte and Thomas Hardy (whom Fitzgerald records merely as an admirer of her poetry and an occasional host). Their love, declared after a chance meeting in the British Museum and left unconsummated for more

than 30 years, not only dominates Mew's life but influences both of their writings. To Parris, Hardy is the inspiration for Mew's poem "The Farmer's Bride", while Mew is the model for Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure*.

Like Mew's own poetry (liberally quoted here), Parris's novel is strongest in the depiction of loneliness and unrequited love: not just the relationship with Hardy but Mew's two more authentic passions for the writers Ella D'Arcy and May Sinclair, both of whom receive her declaration with the contempt that "the normal heart" reserves for the deviant. No fictional character since Raddcliffe Hall's Stephen Gordon has been more obviously propelled into lesbianism than Parris's Mew, who wears her dead father's clothes and is blithely told by her mother that "You must be the man of the family, Charlotte".

Parris's richly imagistic prose is particularly suited to conveying the isolated intensities of childhood. It is less successful at evoking the more complex web of adult life.

Nor does it provide the thematic, symbolic or intellectual unity required of a novel. It remains a fictionalised biography rather than biographical fiction. Chronology becomes its only guiding principle, with a resultant lack of weight. One understands why Mew, who wrote much from her own experience (however disguised), became a poet and a short-story writer rather than a novelist.

Parris's Hardy advises Mew that she should write "those stories – however extraordinary or unorthodox – that one would never relate to one's family at the dinner table".

The problem for Parris herself is that stories of sexual ambiguity and murky domesticity which would have been unrepeatable in polite Victorian society are commonplace today. Nevertheless, what the book lacks in force, it makes up for in imagery. Mew has been fortunate in drawing such a distinguished stylist to her cause.

## Ambulance chasers

Marcel Berlins takes a crash course in fraud

Accidentally on Purpose: the making of a personal injury underworld in America by Ken Dornstein, Macmillan, £19.50

There is a scene in the 1967 film *Meet Whiplash Willie* (in England, *The Fortune Cookie*) in which an ambulance-chasing slyster lawyer played by Walter Matthau is trying to persuade a football player slightly hurt during a game to launch a lawsuit for compensation for his injuries. "I hate to break it to you, kid, but you got a spinal injury... your left leg is numb and you got no feeling in the first three fingers of your right hand." "You're crazy," the Jack Lemmon character replies, "I can move my hand, and my leg." "Sure you can – if you want to blow a million bucks... that's what we're suing for."

The craze for litigation based on whiplash – neck – injuries lasted through the Sixties and Seventies. Insurance companies paid out billions of dollars to claimants who were inventing their injuries entirely or, at best, creatively exaggerating them. But the whiplash phenomenon was just one small part of an unpublicised American industry: a criminal underworld devoted to the faking of personal injuries.

This is not a book about a few slippery lawyers and doctors conspiring with greedy accident

victims to talk up their symptoms and prognoses in order to exact additional compensation. Those scams exist but are the small beer of the trade. What Ken Dornstein describes in *Accidentally on Purpose* is a veritable gangland of ruthless, sophisticated operators using modern methods to defraud insurance companies out of huge sums.

Here is one example: the "capper" is the planner, the choreographer, whose job is to stage an accident that will look like the real thing and lead to multiple claims. He hires "dummies", the victims, often poor Hispanic immigrants. For as little as \$100 each, they will pack into a car ("the squat car") that they know will be involved in an accident. The capper then hires a specialist driver whose job is to provoke an innocent trucker into crashing into the squat car.

The logistics are carefully planned: where, when and what kind of impact is required. The accident achieved, the dummies file their injury claims with the help of dishonest lawyers. Of course, they don't receive a cent of the proceeds. Occasionally, the staging goes wrong and the dummies are hurt badly or even killed. Recently, an attorney who masterminded these "swoop-and-squat" operations was indicted for his part in the death of a passenger in a squat car.

Dornstein started his career as a private investigator in Los Angeles, looking into suspicious accidents. His book describes dozens of varieties of contemporary scams. But his exhaustive historical trawl is even more intriguing.

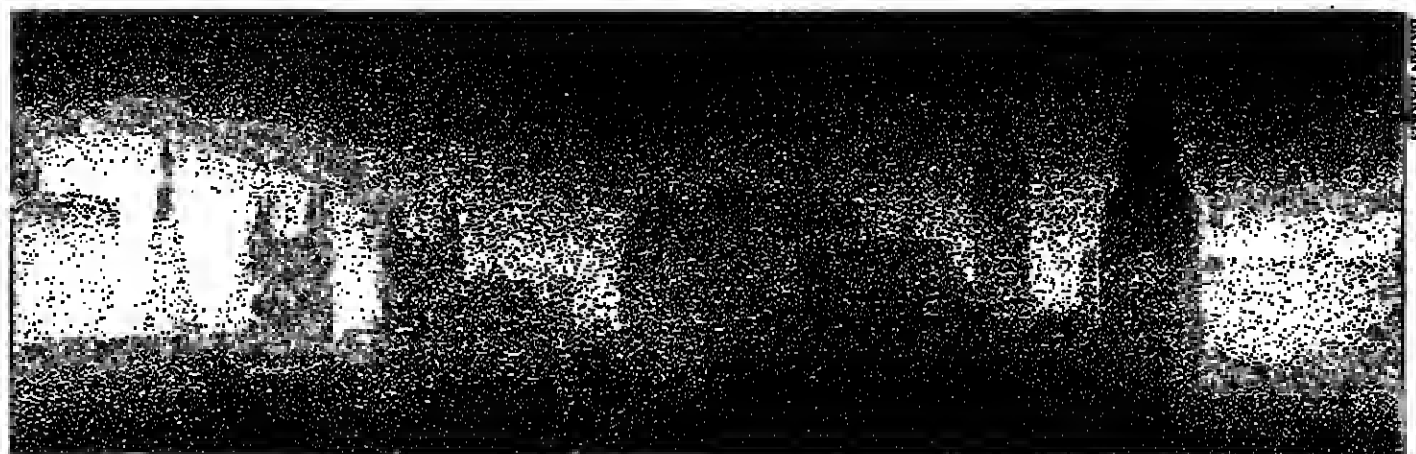
The sheer imagination and expertise of some past fraudsters is

impressive. In the early, jolting days of rail travel, there was "railway spine", an alleged injury caused by sudden movements. "Slip-and-fallers" have been around for a century: "Banana Annie" carried her own peels for slipping on.

One frequent claimant was capable, at will, of both dislocating her bones, and of haemorrhaging. Another regular had the advantage of a neck which, under X-ray, always showed up as broken. During the Depression years the fad was for self-mutilation, with the clever claimants managing to cash in from several companies on the basis of one "accidental" amputation.

Along the way, Dornstein divertingly investigates the terminology of his subject. The term "ambulance chaser" – originally not the lawyer, but his tout – entered the language in the 1890s and was in common use by 1910. Shyster, to mean a dishonest lawyer, did not come, as is usually believed, from the nefarious activities of Sheuster, a New York attorney; Dornstein has discovered an earlier use and, besides, can find no trace of the existence of Sheuster.

*Accidentally on Purpose* contains a great deal of information which has never before been assembled, on a topic which has never before been so scrutinised. Dornstein has done prodigious research (his references amount to 70 pages) and does not always resist the temptation to tell us too much. On the other hand the book is clearly written, contains many interesting and obscure facts, and provides an insight into yet another, hitherto secret, crooked world.



## Seduced by the smoke

Dear London: notes from the big city by Irma Kurtz, Fourth Estate, £14.99

Why should Irma Kurtz ever get married? She's already married to London. Having walked out on New York and her flaming affair with Paris, she chose her poison, "ambivalent, self-searching, diffident, handsome, tolerant, widespread, whingeing, ironical, laid back, lazy old Smoke".

She is one of the spunky expats who arrived in London in the pre-swinging days when ladies still wore white gloves. And the city lifted her on wave after wave. But she was always too sharp and voluble to play the dozy hippie role convincingly.

Kurtz is rare among women because she loves great cities with an almost erotic passion: the glimpse of a courtyard, a lighted window, can make her tumbler for the never-to-be-totally possessed loved one. Not that she hasn't tried – she spent years burrowing in its bowels, but is now ensconced in the thick of it all, in Soho.

I first saw her striding into work in a big advertising agency in Berkeley Square. She was just over from Paris, sporting an existentialist pallor and a black plastic mac. Even the mac radiated urban romance.

Jill Neville shares the urban ecstasy of an agony aunt who married the metropolis

Dennis Hackett, the faded editor of *Nova*, phoned and asked her to join the staff. Irma Kurtz was in at last. "Journalism is to England as bullfighting is to Spain," she writes, "a daring national sport that offers youngsters with the guts for it a chance to pull themselves up out of pedestrian destinies. Hopeful scribbles from the English-speaking world are drawn to London the way hopeful *toreros* are to the Spanish capitals."

No more the *longueur* of office jobs. Overnight, all her bad habits became virtues: the talkativeness, the inquisitiveness, the unstoppable communicativeness. She interviewed every celeb in and out of town and wrote it all up with sleek audacity.

Being young, she was programmed for romance. She found that "the English lover uses a crab-like circumlocution, a sort of scuttling at the most basic declaration, which also serves to confuse amorous predators of the opposite sex".

But she's fond of the poor brutes, "stuck with flashy genitalia that can't be trusted to keep a secret, let alone keep faith". For this female Don Juan, men are lovable creatures but you wouldn't want to live with one.

Instead, she had her beloved son by an artist equally ferocious about not getting married; this was not fashionable at the time.

Her pivotal friendships are curious, often floundering through lack of trust, or perhaps some self-protective reflex designed to keep lots of cool space around her psyche so the whole city can crowd in. She doesn't enjoy formality and is phobic about dinner parties, particularly the embalmed or hitchy kind that she imagines occur nightly in North London.

Kurtz is strictly a streeter and bar-room *flâneuse*, always talking, explicit, explosive, exuberant, experimental, expository, and excited. While there's the lovely dirty city, there's life – although she can see the squalor, it's not the main thing.

When *Cosmopolitan* made her an agony aunt, she found her métier. "I've been a busy-body since the day I was born and it was about time someone paid for what I'd been handing out free all my life." She has been at it now for more than 20 years and still it doesn't bore or swamp her.

There's no whiff of phoniness about this love letter to London, written with bristling intelligence and all the ironies of hindsight, only occasionally falling into journalism. We can go to sleep knowing the city is throbbing away, stuffed with gangsters, drifters, bohemians, businessmen and tramping bores, presided over by our benevolent American-born agony aunt. Only this urban cowgirl, with her endless readiness to be intrigued could take the whole city-to-bed with her every night. That's love indeed.

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# Human folly and the fictions of war

## DJ Taylor on plain men in dark times

The Pardon of Saint Anne by William Palmer, Cape, £9.99  
The World at Night by Alan Furst, HarperCollins, £16.99

Novels about the emotional consequences of warfare tend to take place off the battlefield. Even *Vanity Fair*, much of whose impetus derives from the battle of Waterloo, offers only a single military snapshot – George Osborne lying dead with a bullet in his heart. Similarly, one of the best English novels about the Second World War is Patrick Hamilton's *The Slaves of Solitude* (1947), set in a Thames Valley boarding house, where the tyranny is practised by domineering old armchair-loungers and the victims are browbeaten spinsters. While the heroes of William Palmer's and Alan Furst's new novels are both combatants of a kind, each seems exercised less by sudden death than by the emotional detachment canvassed in Hamilton's title. In these circumstances the dangers of flight are regularly anaesthetised by the promise of a brief recall from the disembodied half-state that war imposes on the average mind. As Furst's protagonist puts it, while contemplating his enforced departure from occupied Paris, "The preparation of an escape... what-ever else it did, showed you your life from an angle of profound reality."

How best to approximate that reality? It was Christopher Isherwood, back in the days of Herr Issywo and Sally Bowles, who popularised the idea of the protagonist as camera lens. The precedent has not been a happy one, and most novels with photographer heroes have a tendency to entomb themselves in rather banal theorising about the nature of pictorial representation. Fortunately, Walter Klinger, the focus – no pun intended – of William Palmer's excellent fourth novel, affects a less exalted gaze: "I had a half-apprehended vision of being the cold, implacable eye that regards human folly," he remarks; the laureate of "the job of phlegm as life turned brown, grey, dead again."

This being the Berlin of the Thirties – and the Isherwood connection, if slight, is unavoidable – Walter has a good many opportunities. The opening section of *The Pardon of Saint Anne*, in fact, is a series of snapshots pulled from the reel of a disintegrating world. Living in the French-occupied part of western Germany with his widowed, English mother, Walter acquires his first camera from a French officer with whom the mother seems to be having an affair. Subsequent instruction, both in darkroom techniques and seduction strategies, comes courtesy of Valenti, an itinerant Jack-the-Lad, who sets himself up as the little spa town's official photographer.

Departing for Berlin in the dog



'Chronicle of evil': Hitler, Albert Speer (right) and Leonard Galt inspect the construction of the House of German Art in Munich

PHOTOGRAPH: AKG

days of Weimar to lodge with his decayed, Junker grandmother, Walter finds his horizons sharply transformed in "an atmosphere of abandonment – of morals and conviction and hope". A lifetime art photographer whose business he fronts while the woman moulders away in the seclusion of her flat.

Abruptly, time fast-forwards to spring 1944 to find Walter, most of his hearing gone in a bomb blast, part of a "craze brigade" guarding the extreme south-west coast of France and embroiled with an Irish woman who inhabits a deserted farmhouse. In a world where every action and thought is governed by the prospect of invasion, Palmer's account of the collection of Nazi officers, each seeking solace in some rarefied hobby, carries tre-

mendous psychological conviction. Appropriately enough it is Captain Wahl's anthropological researches, prosecuted by way of a trip to the ecclesiastical ceremony of the title, which set up the novel's climax. Surviving a resistance-laid car bomb that kills another of his colleagues, Wahl is charged with sifting through the dead man's belongings. Otto's photographs of the execution squads of the Eastern Front confirm his suspicions and – though the ending is ambiguous – prefigure his own destiny.

Unobtrusively done, with the photographic symbolism quietly shifted into place – "It was the Age of silver. Silver and black," Walter laconically remarks of the rise of the SS – *The Pardon of Saint Anne* is an impressive study of the effect of totalitarianism on the average emotional life. At present William Palmer's reputation languishes in that queer hinterland where the esteem of fellow-writers is cancelled out by the indifference of the world at large. It would be a shame if this novel didn't provoke the attention he clearly deserves.

With jacket salutations from William Boyd and Robert Harris, one rather feels that Alan Furst, in

contrast, has already begun to get his just deserts. Set in occupied Paris circa 1940-41, and featuring a movie-director hero, *The World at Night* hits some similar targets. Leaving aside the lavishly-framed atmosphere of subterfuge, Furst's novel is built on more or less the same premise: the individual trying to retain some tiny sense of himself in an increasingly unreal world. Like Palmer, Furst is adept at conveying the sense of drift that draws his characters into situations they would probably have avoided if presented with a definitive choice.

Thus womanising, fortysomething Casson finds that the simple act of pursuing his livelihood – by making films acceptable to the authorities – drags him into an intricate web of collusion, complicated by an affair with an elusive actress. If anything undermines the novel, it's a slight feeling of genre-sanctioned theatricality (Eric Ambler's name is twice invoked). But even the tuppence-coloured love interest – all discarded stockings and small-hours cigarettes – can't detract from an absorbing piece of recreated time, for which the publishing taxonomy of "historical spy novel" seems over-modest.

## David Cesarani on a new life of Hitler's henchman

The Good Nazi: the life and lies of Albert Speer by Dan Van Der Vat Weidenfeld, £20

The fascination of Albert Speer's story is undeniable, even for generations born long after the war he did so much to sustain on the German side. Speer was a well-educated, cultured German converted to Nazism after witnessing Hitler speak. He entered the Party in March 1931, aged 25, and for the next 14 years his meteoric career was bound up with the party, the Third Reich and the Führer.

Speer had good looks, intelligence, energy, charisma and luck. His life is a classic success story intertwined with a chronicle of evil, which is what makes it so poignant. We can easily identify with the charming, gifted and upwardly mobile young professional; the trouble is, he's a Nazi.

Two years ago, Gitta Sereny

published a monumental study of Speer that probed the other endlessly fascinating aspect of his life. At the Nuremberg Tribunal, Speer was one of two defendants to accept responsibility for the crimes of Hitler's regime, although he denied specific knowledge of its heinous acts. He convinced the judges of his repentance but thereafter argument has raged about what he knew and whether his contrition was genuine. To answer these questions, Sereny interviewed Speer exhaustively and juxtaposed his oral recollections against a mass of other evidence.

Dan Van Der Vat began work on his book about Speer when Sereny's tome was already on the slipway. He decided to await the latter's publication so that he could use it as a "source", while deliberately eschewing the interview method which made it distinctive. Van Der Vat claims that anyone who got too close to Speer inexorably fell under his spell. In his

bibliography he naughtily lists Sereny's biography under "Speer's corpus". But this device cannot deflect an inevitable comparison of the two works, in which Van Der Vat comes off the worst.

He presents little significant new information about Speer's life and work. In place of Sereny's penetrating psychological analysis, he delivers a few commonplace observations about the effect of Speer's loveless upbringing. Whereas Sereny inquired deeply into the mutual admiration which Hitler and Speer displayed, he gives short shrift to the notion of a homo-erotic attachment and barely pauses to ask why the two struck up such an enduring friendship. "It was the participants, not their 'relationship' or its well springs, that were extraordinary."

If Sereny devoted too much attention to the relationship, this was a result of her credible effort to humanise both men and to understand their motives. Van Der Vat is content with shallow psycho-biography and stereotypes, which do the work of explanation. What his study lacks in depth is barely compensated for in its breadth.

He basically accepts Speer's version of the "production miracle" in 1942-44, even though recent research has challenged it. Weapons output rose not because German industry became more efficient, as Speer suggested, but because he bullied industrialists into converting civilian production lines to armaments manufacture.

Van Der Vat merely confirms Speer's indifference to the fate of the Jews. The November 1938 pogrom had no impact on him. Speer brushed up against the Final Solution sufficiently often to render his denial of knowledge incredible; but he just didn't care.

Van Der Vat's central charge is that Speer was personally instrumental in existing 75,000 Berlin Jews in 1941-42, thus ensuring their doom. He knew this was a crime and struggled to cover it up, arranging for the chronicle of his ministry to be "sanitised". While taking broad responsibility for the deeds of the regime, he omitted from his biography any reference to his own particular role. Van Der Vat argues that since his "confession" was incomplete, his famous remorse could not have been genuine. It was part of a strategy of self-preservation and manipulation that he began while awaiting trial in 1945.

## Independent choice: science books

By Bernard Dixon

Stupid things, mirrors," the comedian Tony Hancock said in one of his Sixties radio programmes. "Why can't they reflect things properly?" For many years, the neuropsychologist Richard Gregory has persisted in believing that Hancock's question deserves an answer and that many of those on offer are plainly wrong. His mission has been to show that our experience of mirrors, and of optical illusions, can help us to think about the still mysterious processes of perception. With abundant examples drawn not only from science but also from art, psychology and other domains, his latest book *Mirrors in Mind* (WH Freeman/Spektrum, £25) brings these issues to life with exceptional clarity and vitality.

Hancock's irritation stemmed from the fact that things seen in a looking-glass are reversed from left to right, but not top to bottom. "Mirror writing", for example, does not appear upside down. But this is by no means the only oddity. Look at each of your eyes alternately in a mirror. They do not appear to move. Yet a friend's eyes clearly do move if you ask him or her to look at one of your eyes and then the other. Why?

As Richard Gregory indicates, the first step towards understanding these phenomena is to realise that they raise questions at all. Gregory is an illuminating pilot, leading us through many competing interpretations to his goal of establishing that perception is not a passive acquisition of information from the outside world. It is an active process in which our brain uses past experience as well as incoming sensory cues.

"The paradox of seeing oneself

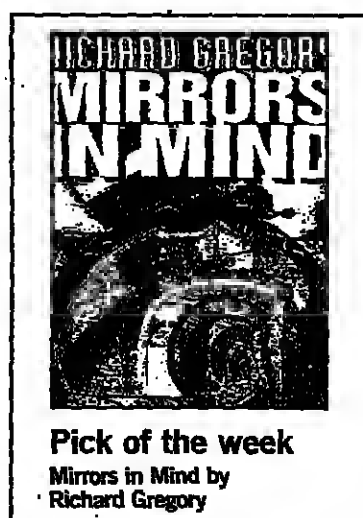
through a mirror while knowing one is in front of it... is not in the mirror or the light," Gregory writes. "It is in our perception. If we were either more or less stupid, such paradoxes might change, or disappear, or become even richer."

Mirrors also appear in *How Brains Think: Evolving Intelligence, Then and Now* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £11.99). The neuropsychologist William Calvin describes how some animals can recognise themselves in a mirror, while others try to attack or befuddle the reflected image. A capuchin monkey will spend weeks threatening the "other animal" when a mirror is placed in its cage, whereas chimpanzees know who it is either immediately or within a few days.

Calvin considers and then eliminates the idea of self-recognition as something that intelligence is not. He discards IQ, too, because it is simply "one fascinating aspect of intelligence", which should not subsume others. The capacity for complex behaviour is another tempting definition of intelligence, but not a plausible one because it can be innate, wired in from birth.

Calvin is much more taken by Jean Piaget's notion that intelligence is what you use when you don't know what to do: "This captures the element of novelty, the coping and groping needed when there is no 'right answer'." Yet this seems not to be the entire story, either. Likewise with speed of learning, which is simply "related to intelligence". Perhaps, Calvin concludes, intelligent behaviour is really the capacity to combine these and other mental abilities.

His book is not only an assessment of intelligence *per se* but also an exam-



Pick of the week  
Mirrors in Mind by Richard Gregory

ination of how evolution has produced increasingly intelligent brains over the last few million years. Calvin brings both strands together by modernising William James's suggestion that thought involves Darwin's concept of the selection of randomly generated novelty. He points to "brain wiring that could operate the fully-fledged Darwinian process, and probably on the milliseconds-to-minutes time-scale of consciousness." This, he says, "has provided me with the best glimpses so far of mechanisms for higher intellectual function: how we can guess, speak sentences we've never spoken before, and even operate on a metaphorical plane."

By no means all Calvin's peers will follow him in discerning Darwin beneath our mental life. Yet it is a challenging theory, founded on a variety of evidence. It requires only a change of time-scale to sound highly plausible: the capacity of cells in the immune system to generate within days, through a quasi-Darwinian

process, antibodies to match an astronomical range of antigens which they encounter in invading microbes.

Paul Martin, in *The Slickening Mind: Brain, Behaviour, Immunity and Disease* (HarperCollins, £16.99) is concerned not with the analogy between mind and the immune system, but with the emerging links between the two. His primary task is to explain how stress and depression may increase our chances of developing infections, heart disease and even cancer. The "mind" is important not least because evidence that we can prevent illness by mobilising mental resources is less overwhelming than popular health books claim.

However, Martin is a sure guide in this controversial field – and an eloquent one. Like Richard Gregory, he bases his case in part on the observations of Shakespeare and other literary giants of the past. But it is contemporary science which most strongly supports his contention that the relationship of mind to health is mediated both by our behaviour, and by biological connections between the brain and the immune system.

Contemporary science is not yet ready to endorse Sir Roger Penrose's elegantly argued suggestion that consciousness itself is associated with the microtubules in brain cells. In *The Large, the Small and the Human Mind* (Cambridge University Press, £14.95), the Oxford mathematician is joined by his critics Abner Shimony, Nancy Cartwright and Stephen Hawking, to review Penrose's theory that thinking takes place by "non-computational" means. The jury is still out, but this book is a stimulating and compact review of Penrose's own thinking.

## 'Aspects' of Oz

Pete Davies treks through the outback

No Worries: a journey through Australia by Mark McCrum Sinclair-Stevenson, £9.99

Once asked a Kiwi if the Maoris ever went to Australia. She said she didn't know, but if they did they'd have thought, Nab. Big hot dry huggy place, this. Then they'd have gone back home – and there are times when Mark McCrum evidently felt the same. Halfway through his book, he sets off round Broome "pessimistically seeking adventure", and I had by then rather come to share his pessimism.

Eurotoons drearily mating in backpacker hostels; people keeping him awake on the train; endless eucalyptuses – it may well get him down, and when his girl-friend comes to visit (did we really need to know about that?) it may well make him homesick. But I did wonder whether a travel writer who gets homesick is, just possibly, in the wrong line of trade.

These *longueurs* are a shame; in a hitty way, there's good material here. Tumbling out of English history towards its place on the Pacific Rim like an overweight gymnast uncertain how he'll land, Australia is certainly a subject crying out for better coverage. Between the bright froth of the cities and the harsh outback, McCrum

suggests well enough how the country is a thin necklace of the modern world, tentatively slung round the parched vastness of its unfathomable interior.

But too often he struggles for focus. Australians keep asking, of his book about their home: "What aspect?" In the end, I wasn't too sure what aspect he was after. McCrum, certainly, can be witty and engaging – but too many flip asides, too many subjects closed off with a quip and a shrug, make in the end for an incomplete read. They also sit oddly beside the book's extensive, insufficiently edited chunks of interviews with people who are sometimes extremely interesting, and sometimes quite the opposite.

The result is neither fish nor fowl. Early on, McCrum is advised by a Melbourne salesman that if he wants commercial success Down Under, his best approach is to "tyke the piss" – and when he does so, it's often sharp. But to his credit, he's evidently not cruel or insensitive enough to go all the way down that road, and when he trips up over dark secrets, or gnaws away at troubling issues, humour fades into unresolved concern.

Eventually you want to cry out: Could you make your mind up? Do you like it or don't you? Or, indeed, what aspect?

hundred times that much). But every time you feel that he's at last getting down into the red dirt of the place, he bounces back off it, as if Australia is just too strange – as if he can't leave his Englishness behind.

Perhaps the problem, after Bill Bryson's success, is that publishers now want every travel writer to be funny. McCrum, certainly, can be witty and engaging – but too many flip asides, too many subjects closed off with a quip and a shrug, make in the end for an incomplete read. They also sit oddly beside the book's extensive, insufficiently edited chunks of interviews with people who are sometimes extremely interesting, and sometimes quite the opposite.

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## Paperbacks

By Boyd Tonkin

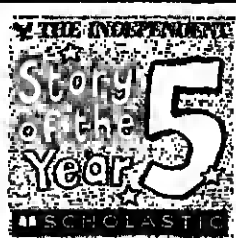
**Last Orders** by Graham Swift (Picador, £5.99) In the 1996 Booker winner, four veteran Sarf Londoners carry their hutch-pal's ashes to Margate in a son of latterday *Conkerbury Tale*. Marked by deep craft and complex decency, this seems nonetheless to be a novel that many readers admire rather than love. Why? Swift is that irascible animal, a writer's writer. As with subtle chamber music, his weaving of the four distinct voices as they review their tangled lives may wow the pros but leave the laity cold. Still, it's hard to fault the stoic wisdom of this rueful crew as they approach their terminus (in every sense). "What you've got to understand is the nature of the goods. Which is perishable."

**How to be a Minister** by Gerald Kaufman (Faber, £8.99) The Commons' hest (and only?) expen on classic Hollywood musicals dusts down his 1980 primer on another kind of song-and-dance. Aimed at promoted party backs with their hands on the Red Boxes at last, Kaufman's guide to survival in Whitehall advises office-holders how to stop the wiles of the civil service from turning them "into a pod straight out of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*". Robust, witty and sardonic, his book only loses the plot in its dated anecdotes. Tales of Our Hero, in his glory days of the 1970s, trumping the Sir Humphreys to rescue a widget mill in Pontefract or Dewsbury have all the sepia charm of a *Wakes Week* photo album. Laugh? I almost went out for beer and sandwiches with the HEC.

**Hungry Ghosts: China's secret famine** by Jasper Becker (John Murray, £13) The media requires for Deng Xiaoping have given the impression that only the Tiananmen Square carnage seriously blotted the Great Reformer's copybook. Yet, in his loyal Maoist days of the

mid-1950s, Deng helped launch the mis-named Great Leap Forward in the Chinese countryside. Botched collectivisation and Stalinist mumbo-jumbo dressed up as genetic science managed to ruin the rural economy. A staggering total of up to 30 million peasants may have starved from 1958 to 1962 in this, the century's worst man-made calamity. As for Deng, Becker's superbly researched and horrifying history shows that he did, in time, come to respect the damning evidence. He launched a campaign to reverse the deadly policies in favour of sane farming, made an enemy of Mao and so provoked his own disgrace during the Cultural Revolution. On Deng's part, the famine may count as a fatal blunder rather than a crime – but that made little difference to its victims.

**The Unruly Queen** by Flora Fraser (Papermac, £10) Although there are sinister parallels between our current version of the Princess of Wales and poor Caroline of Brunswick, whose fate it was to marry the Prince Regent in 1795 – they both suffered from crowded marriage syndrome, caused constitutional uproar by separating from their husbands and were suspicious of palace courtiers – Diana wins hands down when it comes to fashion. Caroline, as Flora Fraser notes in this excellent biography, was a short, dumpy stowen who owned nothing but coarse petticoats, wore her stockings inside out and, on the eve of her wedding, had to be given "some frank instructions about her washing habits" by Lord Malmesbury. It's hardly surprising that Caroline finally took revenge on her adopted country, attempting to storm Parliament during the Coronation and asking while on a visit to inspect the maimed pensioners at Greenwich Hospital: "Do all Englishmen have only one arm or leg?"



**Can you write a winning short story for 6-9 year-old children?**

Don't miss *The Year* on Thursday for details of the 1997 Story of the Year competition. First prize is £2,000, with £500 for the two runners up – and to celebrate the competition's fifth birthday, we will be awarding a special trophy to all three. The winning story

will be published in the *Independent Magazine*, and the top 10 stories will appear in a specially commissioned anthology from Scholastic Children's Books. So sharpen those pencils – and find out on Thursday about another celebrity's bedtime stories.

## The worm in the bud

Harriet Paterson slips into a smooth tale of eastern promise

*Silk* by Alessandro Baricco, Harvill, £6.99

Alessandro Baricco is hot publishing property in Italy, a rare commodity in a country where literary fiction is struggling to keep its head above water. He wins prizes with ease for his novels, of which this is the third. An effortless little book, *Silk* is the work of an author who knows how to please – as do his publishers, who have wrapped the book in the smoothest, silkiest laminate you're likely to find. The text is set like a long prose poem, tiny chapters surrounded by acres of white space, encouraging the tranquil sensations which reading the book produces.

and Egypt. The prosperity of his home town in the south of France depends upon his annual delivery.

Eventually the only country that remains uncontaminated is Japan, where foreigners are hanged on sight, but where silkworms superior to all others are rumoured to exist. Carrying a fortune in gold, Hervé must travel the end of the world, smuggle himself into the forbidden country and procure the worms. He has an exactly circumscribed amount of time to make it back home before the eggs hatch.

The fact that a love story grows out of this already romantic premise comes as no surprise. Baricco makes spare but sufficient use of ritual elements of Japanese sensuality as perceived by the western mind – bathing ceremonies, loose kimonos, shadows on rice-paper walls.

His writing shows an author in unquestioned control of his vocabulary, his phrases brief but precisely



Scene of a crime: before and after view of the vandalised figures of Henry Moore's sculpture, *The King and Queen* PHOTO: FRANK RYAN

## Smash and gab

James Hall wonders why so many critics have joined the demolition business

**The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution** by Dario Gamboni, Reaktion Books, £25

After a day at the British Museum in 1855, the American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne announced with the confidence born of belonging to a youthful nation: "We do not recognize for rubbish what is really rubbish". Four years later, he was even more forthright in *The Marble Faun*, a novel set in Rome. "All towns should be made capable of purification by fire, or of decay within each half-century. Otherwise, they become the hereditary haunts of vermin and noisomeness, besides standing apart from the possibility of improvements."

Cultural cleansing is the subject of Dario Gamboni's *The Destruction of Art*, a well-illustrated and level-headed study of iconoclasm and vandalism since the French Revolution. The subject of iconoclasm is currently a growth industry, but what makes Gamboni's book particularly useful is his refusal to limit himself to high-profile attacks on public sculpture, whether they be Communist monuments in eastern Europe or avant-garde sculptures like Richard Serra's "Tilted Arc". He also discusses more subtle and legalised forms of iconoclasm, perpetrated from above by artists, restorers and museum officials.

Indeed, for Gamboni, our society is predicated on iconoclasm. An obvious example would be the

recent advertising campaign urging us to "chuck out your chintz".

Gamboni starts with the French Revolution because destruction and preservation were linked here as never before. Monuments to the *ancien régime* were systematically destroyed, and artworks stripped from palaces and churches. The worst instance of revolutionary vandalism (the term was coined in 1794) occurred in the abbey of St Denis, where the kings of France had been buried since the middle ages. There, 51 tombs were destroyed during three days of uninterrupted demolition.

But from this holocaust arose the idea of patrimony and national heritage. The best old-master paintings were taken to the Louvre, which was founded by the revolutionaries. This action was justified on the grounds that, although many art works were dedicated to the ruling classes, they were also testaments to the work of artists, and embodied values that transcended the circumstances of their commission.

The revolutionaries found it much harder to accept the timeless artistic status of French sculpture. Nonetheless, the painter Alexander Lenoir did rescue some sculptures to establish the short-lived Museum of French Monuments. Lenoir provided the first chronological survey of French sculpture and wrote the first systematic catalogue. In order to make his points about the development of sculpture, however, Lenoir changed the appearance of many works beyond recognition. In

1834, Prosper Mérimée observed that clumsy restorers were more dangerous enemies of monuments than Protestants and *sans-culottes*.

Gamboni's best chapter explores the recent demise of communist monuments in Eastern Europe. Many statues were destroyed, and a particularly popular form of destruction was to put a cable round the neck of the figure and dangle it from a crane before dropping it on the ground. Symbolic banging is the fate that awaited the statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky, founder of the KGB. Nonetheless, the iconoclasm has not been unanimously approved. Some Muscovites wanted the Dzerzhinsky monument to remain because it was "a part of our history". One woman had hoped to be able to tell her son in future that "this guy was a bastard". With hindsight, some monuments have come to seem a lesser evil, for they are usually replaced by boardings for Coca-Cola and Mercedes-Benz.

Successors to Lenoir's Museum of French Monuments have been established. A statue park was set up in Moscow near the Tretyakov Gallery (Russia's equivalent of the Tate). However, many statues were simply dumped on the ground in a fragmented and graffiti-covered state. Another sculpture park was opened in 1993 in Budapest: 61 monuments that had suffered repeated attacks were sent there and a poem, "A Sentence on Tyranny", greets visitors at the entrance. These parks work on a similar principle to the Nazis'

Degenerate Art exhibitions. But no doubt they will soon seem as evocative as Roman ruins.

Gamboni brings together a great deal of fascinating information, but he does not really marshal his evidence into a sustained argument. *The Destruction of Art* reads a bit like an anthology of anecdotes. The trouble is that it is almost impossible to identify a psychology of iconoclasm. There are almost as many motives as iconoclasts. The most politically incorrect explanation is given in a cartoon from the 1960s by Ronald Searle, "The Philistines": disabled men threaten gigantic sculptural fragments representing the body part that lack.

In the past ten years, there has been a flurry of works in which iconoclasm is the central theme, from academic studies, such as David Freedberg's *The Power of Images* (1989) to Andrew Graham-Dixon's TV series, *A History of British Art* (1996). A new genre of art-book documents in detail the birth, life and death of a public sculpture: Richard Serra's "Tilted Arc" (1991) or Rachel Whiteread's "House" (1995). So why is iconoclasm now being brought into the open? The most obvious reason is that it is the perfect *fin-de-siècle* theme. It is as death-fixated as any hospital drama or film by Quentin Tarantino. Whereas a late-1980s artist like Jeff Koons was obsessed with sex, a 1990s superstar like Damien Hirst is primarily interested in death. We're all hanging around the scene of a crime, looking for casualties.



**«The ease and high silken finish suggest that Baricco is coasting»**

cadenced – in Guido Waldman's translation, as in the original. Here there will be no image out of place, no unruly ordering of words. Perhaps the only stylistic lapse comes towards the end, where he indulges in a burst of stream-of-consciousness criticism which it is hard not to find comic in the midst of an otherwise restrained work.

Baricco is less interested in historical detail than in creating a broadly poetic tale which leaves behind a number of distinct *tableaux*: a sky full of precious exotic birds released from their aviary, two men sitting

looking out over a lake where a concubine is swimming, an orange dress and two straw sandals left lying on the ground.

The ease and high silken finish of the writing suggest that Baricco is coasting after his more substantial novels, especially *Oceanic Motel* with its probing questions about the nature of memory. Nevertheless, this small but perfectly formed novella offers an elegant and unfrenzied entry into his work; and if a writer wishes to switch from sustained narrative verse to the art of haiku, then who am I to argue?

## Surface tensions

Elisa Segrave faces the ugly truth about cosmetic surgery

*Skin* by Joanna Briscoe, Phoenix House, £16.99

You will certainly never want a face-lift after reading this novel. Its heroine Adèle Meier, a former beauty and a best-selling author who invented a subversive character called Loulou, finds herself in middle-age, living alone in Paris. She is no longer with Laurence, her great love, whom she met in New York as a young woman. Once, Laurence left his wife and baby for her. Now he has returned to England and married a conventional English wife.

Joanna Briscoe describes in graphic detail the facial operations Adèle embarks on in Paris in order to stave off the signs of approaching age: "the surgeon removed a string of fat from the patient's eyelid. This was shining yellow and lumpy in texture" while "the patient's cheek... flopped over her ear, unattached, rooted only at the mouth, nose and eyes". In between each operation and its painful after-effects, Adèle's past unfolds. Her Austrian parents emigrated to Virginia with 14-year-old Adèle, her older sister Kati and her two brothers John and Karl. Her father abandoned them for a local woman while Adèle was still a teenager. A few years later her mother died of a heart attack. Adèle went north, first to New Jersey, then to New York.

Adèle's narcissism in middle age makes her seem unsympathetic. We do not learn about her girlhood until later. I am not sure how far Briscoe intended to create such an immediately unlikeable character. Adèle's cold-blooded seductions of two young men in Paris, undertaken

mainly to convince herself that she still has sexual power, are described with skilful eroticism. I must admit to envy – both of Briscoe for her writing and of Adèle herself for nailing two young men at her age. Nonetheless, this lack of emotion makes these scenes ultimately chilling. Indeed, apart from her love for her stepdaughter, Melina (hospitalised in England with anorexia), Adèle often seems so self-absorbed that I found it difficult to believe that she had written a best-selling book with universal appeal.

"Loulou has very exotic sex and manipulates men and says what most women only dare to think in their secret minds," Adèle says, explaining her book's success to an audience of fans in Paris. But although she has won acclaim for inventing a contemporary feminist idol, Adèle knows that she has always relied heavily on male admiration. "I always needed my Holy Grail, the male with his hormones and his gifts to me", she admits to herself. And yet, long ago in New York, during her heady period as a young beauty, she had already half-realised the flip side of sexual magnetism. "I was excited by men as I was injured by men. It's terrible, so high, you are their circus animal, pretty pet and leash."

This accomplished, intelligent novel throws up interesting questions. Are beautiful women different? Is ageing actually worse for them, because they are accustomed to depend on their looks? Do very beautiful women often become narcissistic when young?

In one poignant moment, while recovering from facial surgery, Adèle remembers the older women she used to see on

the Upper East Side where – in her twenties, at the height of her attractiveness – she worked as personal secretary to a German banker's wife. She never gave these women and their face-lifts more than a passing thought but now, alone in Paris, she recalls the "shark-grips of effort stretching their features" and their eyes, "widened with simulated youth and yet precisely blank, a dull dead glitter".

Worrying, too late, about the cycle of operations she has inflicted on herself, she realises that she is no different from them. "The surgical interventions create a homogenised tribe: women who resemble each other, sisters under the skin." *Skin* has some beautiful passages, in particular when Adèle tells how she and Laurence first fell in love. I also liked the descriptions of her youth in New York, where, after a stint in the Martha Washington women's hostel and some unsatisfactory flat-shares, she settles with two girlfriends in "a brownstone in the dusty and blossomed upper reaches of Greenwich Village, on West 13th Street, where the white church struck bells and Sixth Avenue was a clutter of shoe repairers and discount shops".

There are also many memorable vignettes and pithy remarks about men, as when Laurence first makes love to her: "He was different, in the way that men are when they are erect and as vulnerable as boys with sticks, and sinewed and Biblical and alarming".

But I suspect that *Skin* will be remembered most for its powerful evocation of panic and loneliness: of that disturbing moment when every woman is forced to realise, for the first time, that she too will grow old.

**A week in books**

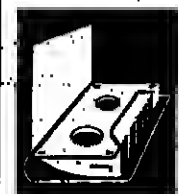
The oddest revelations in Gary O'Connor's much-touted life of Peggy Ashcroft involve the great thespian's passion for cricket. Playing Margaret of Anjou at Stratford in 1963, the *grande dame* of the stage, tucked a radio transmitter into her bra during rehearsals so she could listen to the Test Match. She also organised a Lancashire-Yorkshire charity match: E M E Ashcroft, bowled Len Hutton, 16. Later, cricket chatter would sustain a long "chase affair" with Harold Pinter. Indeed, O'Connor's *The Secret Woman* (Weidenfeld, £20) omits to notice that – if you ignore her first and last husbands, and the passing trade – Dame Peggy's now-famous roster of celebrity lovers makes up an eleven. This team hats all the way down, with a slight loss of sparkle in the middle: J B Priestley, Paul Robeson, Walter Sickert, Mark Dignam, Theodore Komisarjevsky, Michel Saint-Denis, Billy Buchan (John's son), Burgess Meredith, Tony Britton, William Devlin, George Devine. (Pinter could be the non-playing coach.) As a new twist to the showbiz bio, this has potential. Coming soon: Dame Edith Evans and the *catenaccio* defence.

After finishing O'Connor's book, you crave some escape from the stultifying limits of its genre. As a "property" as well as a text, it reveals what's gone wrong with the tacky trade in private lives. Extracted in the press for the usual handsome fee attached to sex with the stars, the mushy passages that name those paramours will become the book for most of its audience: Few will bother now about its critical lapses.

Before she died in 1991, Dame Peggy worked with Michael Billington on a sound survey of her roles, from Juliet to *The Jewel in the Crown*. Sex, in other words, is all O'Connor has to sell, as he can't quote from letters (the children refused him permission). Even so, he fails to build a solid bridge between the turbulent off-stage soul and the regal, even chilly star. And his syntax brings to mind a knitting-basket after the intentions of a pair of frisky kittens. We even learn that "Harriet Walter first met Peggy when she was 74" – had news for Ms Walter. But who needs an editor when the papers will bombard you with big cheques for soft-centred little-fatties? The book is a meretricious muddle. And so is the publishing culture that wraps shabby goods in sensation-seeking hype.

Boyd Tonkin

## Audiobooks



**Classic Railway Murders** (CSA, 10 cassettes, 2hrs 45 mins, £8.99) offers four tales from the age of steam. Well-contrasted writers, first-rate production: versatile readings by Patrick Malahide. Plays work well heard rather than seen, especially when they offer, as *White always does*, an aphorism a minute. *Lady Windermere's Fan* (Naxos, 1hr 43 mins, £7.99) is a topical tale in the context of today's moral panic, and the final scene between the mysterious Mrs Eryane (Juliet Stevenson) and Lady Windermere (Sarah Fielding) is powerful theatre.

Christina Hardyment



## travel &amp; outdoors

Cathedral to coast in Devon and Cornwall ..... 16/17  
Will wolves roam the Highlands again? ..... 18  
The garden rescuers .. 19



Crossing six time zones, the Trans-Mongolian Express breaks many other barriers. PHOTOGRAPH BY LANDMANN/SP

## Through Russia with love

This afternoon a party of intrepid British astronomers departs from Moscow by train for Mongolia and China. Nine years ago, Jeremy Atiyah travelled the other way, through a quite different world

Moscow was only 24 hours east, but the Russian capital could have been a light year back down the track. That winter in Berlin the fog over Alexanderplatz still had the sad smell of coal dust and Communism, but I didn't care. Metres away, cocooned in its wall, West Berlin was a city of dreams. Its centre comprised budget supermarkets, designer sex shops, ongoing student demonstrations and one memento of the Second World War: the ruined Kaiser Wilhelm Church. Somewhere out there, among the punks in Bismarck Park and the *grandes dames* wearing fur coats, but Ku'damm, was a girl called Xiaosong, dressed in red for her first day in the West. On a winter's day in the city of dreams, I was looking for a girl from Communist China.

Was it only seven days since we had met in the restaurant car of a train somewhere in the vicinity of Mongolia? Professor Zhang and his comrades were eating their last Chinese dinner, and teaching me how to use chopsticks. "This is the best day of our lives," giggled the professor. Yes, China was that bad. All these worn-out intellectuals were leaving their families for the sake of science studentships in Continental Europe. Only Xiaosong in the outsized red coat was different; she plonked herself at the table with a smile to light up the wintry Mongolian steppe for ever. "Literature," she whispered in a pure, seamless accent. "In Deutschland. You don't speak German?" I didn't.

"Oh yes," Professor Zhang confided in me the next morning. "M-m-m-many Chinese girls want to m-m-m-marry Western men." Outside, the sun shone weakly on a treeless, snow-flecked land and I wondered why he was telling me this. It transpired that he was carrying in his pocket lists of Chinese women seeking marital alliances with Western men. But apart from me, the only other man in our carriage was a melancholy Yugoslav with a suitcase full of vodka.

The crowded carriages at the other end of the train were more promising for thoughts of marriage. Xiaosong was there for a start. I decided to visit her, hauling open the connecting carriage doors one by one, exposing myself to the din of wheels and blasts of ferocious winter. In the last carriage, I found her ensconced in a compartment with a group of Chinese boys, also, perhaps, going to West Germany to study literature.

"Oh no. We are going to East Germany," one of them explained. "To work in the mines."

I was mumbling something about short straws when one Erhard Kempe suddenly arrived from the bathroom. He had a

morose expression and pronounced German "Charmant". East German police? I wish he had been. He turned out to be a flakey West German tourist from Hannover with a berth in the same compartment as Xiaosong.

Undaunted, I returned that evening with a bottle of brandy which I drank all by myself. I ate Xiaosong's chocolates impulsively, admired her tape of Chinese pop music and requested that she write out the incomprehensible lyrics of one of the songs, "Maybe in Winter". Erhard fought back by embarking on a lengthy explanation of the "Charmant" education system. Fortunately, we still had the whole of Russia to cross.

The Soviet Union arrived at midnight with lights on the snow, a watch-tower, barbed wire, and soldiers in long coats running beside the train. "I h-h-hate Russia," said Professor Zhang in a high-pitched whisper, as blond men probed at his bulging briefcase. Chugging alongside Lake Baikal later, I sat alone, moulting the meaningless sounds of "Maybe in Winter", while the frozen lake buckled and cracked and heaped itself into mounds of rubble, shining a mysterious blue against the snow-laden sky.

Professor Zhang was obsessed with my conjugal status. He appeared daily at my doorway, asking when I would marry. Not in the near future, I barked, tightly. Siberia, and Erhard's long-winded accounts of German history, were wearing me down. For three days, the landscape consisted of melancholy birch forests, interspersed by villages of wooden houses suffocating under the continuous snow. At Novosibirsk I changed money with a man in a dirty coat; at Sverdlovsk I bought a hard-boiled egg. On the last day Xiaosong dropped by to give me a contact address - in Hannover.

There was no red carpet for our final

arrival in Moscow. Instead, the platform was covered in a thick, dirty slush. In dribs and drabs, the passengers from China transferred across town to Belarusskaya Station, where I volunteered to stand in a Soviet queue to make our onward reservations to Berlin. I stood in it, heroically, for four hours.

Only in mid-afternoon was I ready for a touristic rampage round Moscow with my Chinese bride-to-be. As it turned out, Xiaosong had already asked Professor Zhang and eight other Chinese friends to join us, along with Erhard Kempe. Never mind. Wet, romantic snow was falling as darkness fell. I saw uneven pavements, pink stucco and tall women on the underground escalators with pale faces and furry hats. In the streets, the last rays of a maverick sun suddenly fell on to the spires of the Kremlin. En masse, we stormed the Hotel Rossiya on Red Square for a round of vodka, for which I ostentatiously emptied my wallet.

From Moscow to Berlin, we still had another 24 hours of Pot Noodles and Chinese tea, but by now emotional excitement and brandy was destroying my mind. The train was crowded and overheated, and I awoke to the sounds of raucous, collective snoring. Discomfited, I sat in the half-lit corridor to wait for a grey day to slide past over Poland. Outside, on the plains, the last shreds of snow had almost gone.

Professor Zhang was jubilant at having smuggled his dollars through Russia in the lining of his briefcase. Erhard was waxing ever more eloquent as we approached his homeland. But I was tired. And when they appeared, the East German border police - with their fat faces, military accents, torches, peaked caps and shining boots - looked remarkably like unreconstructed Nazis. Our belongings were microscopically examined; Professor Zhang was suddenly ordered to leave the train. Horror! There he was, now speechless with fear, putting on three pairs of trousers, manically packing away his pots and cups and chopsticks. The last we saw of him, he stood alone, a little man on the platform beside a ton of luggage. The winter took on a nightmarish hue.

East Berlin was on us before we knew it, and Xiaosong was the next to disappear. The Ostbahnhof was infernally dark, packed with shrieking, growling engines and hissing with jets of steam. Soviet soldiers in long coats stood like ghosts in the shadows. One minute Xiaosong was there - the next she had gone. I had visions of a plot. Victims picked off one by one! I blundered about emotionally in the darkness, convinced that no one could escape Communism in winter.

Amid the panic, a familiar face loomed out of the darkness: Erhard Kempe. "Ver

is the young lady?" he exclaimed, roughly. Well, at least he didn't know either. Instead he angrily escorted me through the darkness to the West Berlin train where I found the only remaining Chinese, Yu Wei, in a colossal furry hat, mumbling through his hand about wanting to see the West. He had just two minutes to wait. The train creaked through Alexanderplatz and then over the Berlin Wall itself. The ghostly no-man's-land with its floodlights illuminating the death-strip

inspired Yu Wei, oddly, to start invoking Proust and Yeats as the embodiment of his Western dream.

I couldn't help thinking that the West was mainly about nice cars and decent accommodation. Or so I told myself, gloomily, as I checked into a hotel later that night. Yu Wei had presented me with his furry winter hat and departed for Frankfurt, while Erhard had bought me a copy of *The Times*. "A real piece of, ah, 'Charmant' hospitality," he had said,

grasping my hand like a spanner before marching away into the mist.

In bed at last, I drifted into the dreams of West Berlin. Would the skateboarders around the Kaiser Wilhelm Church be feeling the cold tomorrow morning? Would I find the girl from Communist China? The tune of "Maybe in Winter" began playing in my mind. One day, I dreamt, Xiaosong would tell me what its lyrics meant.

Jeremy Atiyah married Xiaosong in 1991

## Traditions of Arabia



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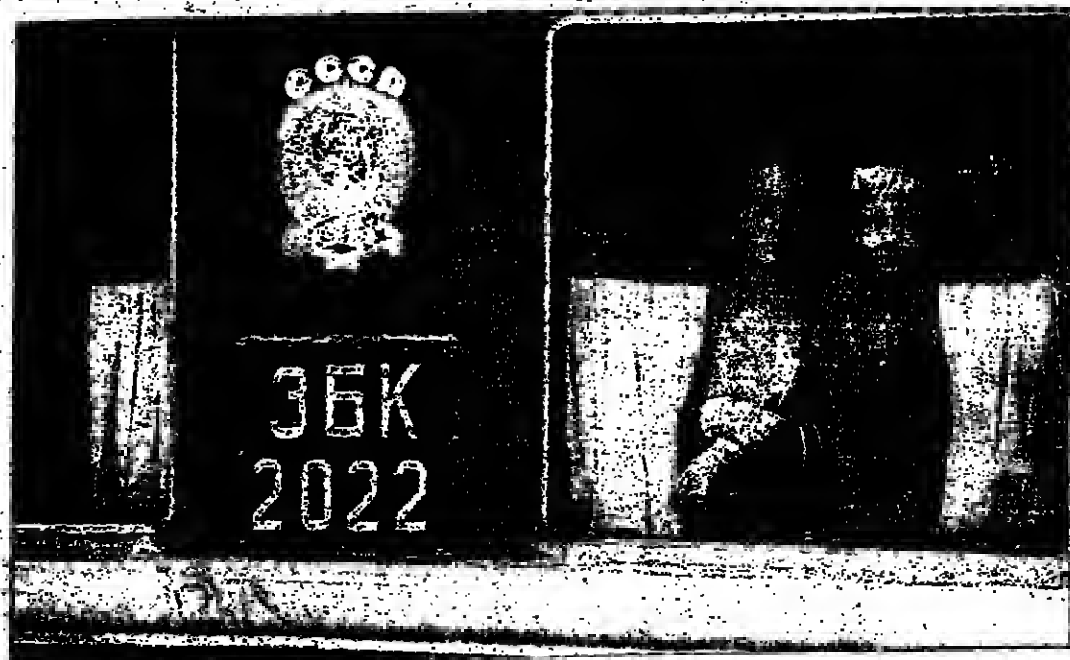
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Berlin or bust: the train carried the hopes of Chinese and East Europeans who made the break to the West







Simon Calder

'The only thing that worked on air-conditioned stock was the supplement you paid for it'

**R**ail service," says a new report from a thoroughly reliable source, "continues to slide into oblivion, as the newly privatised railways simply disperse with those few passenger trains they inherited."

You may be relieved to learn that the country thus described is not Britain, but Brazil. The source is the new *Thomas Cook Overseas Timetable*, published today at £8.40. Its stoic air of resignation about life for the train traveller in Latin America makes Britain's rail system seem a picture of perfection.

The last edition reported that, in Ecuador, "all ENFE railcars have broken down and nothing is actually running at all." Evidence in the new timetable suggests this started a trend: "The organisation contracted to run passenger services on Bolivian Railways," reports the Editor, "has apparently ceased to operate any passenger trains."

Further north, "FNM in Mexico, in the throes of privatisation, still manages to provide some sort of service, although timekeeping is erratic. All diners are officially off, and sleepers run only in weekends, and then only on two trains..." A recent traveller assured us that the only thing that worked on air-conditioned stock was the supplement you paid to travel in it.

At least the compilers have helpful contacts in Latin America. If this year should find you travelling to Lebanon, please spare a thought for the loneliness of the Thomas Cook team in Peterborough:

"Lebanon has been a difficult nut for us to crack for a long time now, as no-one there really wants to talk to us."

"Please don't take all those silly Spanish coins home with you." When the cabin steward on my Airtours day trip to Seville made this announcement, I cynically suspected (a) Anglo-chauvinism, and/or (b) a ploy to boost the profits of Britain's second-largest tour operator. But the appeal for loose change was in fact intended to amplify the funds of the Variety Club of Great Britain. And if you need any more persuasion to give to a good cause, take note that the peseta in your pocket may be worthless.

The treasury in Madrid has announced that older designs of coins are no longer legal tender in Spain. Old versions of the one-, five- and 25-peseta coins will not be accepted by shopkeepers. So instead of saving your spare change for the next trip to Spain, you may as well give the money to Airtours - which has special arrangements for converting old pesetas into new pounds for the Variety Club.

# Cutting figures, carving lines

Stephen Wood reveals next season's ski fashions



Snow + Rock's retro 'pilot' outfit

**H**old on to your bobble hats: "The 1997/8 winter season will not focus on the 'wild Seventies', 'modern style' or 'technical skiwear'," says a report from this month's Munich winter sports fashion show, "but on the carving theme. Basically, carving lines [are] a mixture of casual snowboard fashion and technically sophisticated, sporty-looking skiwear."

That's the men sorted. "Ladies ski fashion is quite different, almost unaffected by the carving style," the report continues. "It focuses on the retro themes [of] snug-fitting lines and almost severe contours... waisted blouses with a hint of peplum and the occasional real or imitation fur collar." Although "the range of colours is enormous" - from coral via beige to black - "white is an absolute must for ladies, combined for contrast or on its own." And fabrics? "The glitter of gold and silver, the sheen of satin on tone-in-tone jacquards, layered micros, coarse-structured stretch, soft smoked inserts and shimmering shot fabrics are all back again."

My contribution to fashion has been limited: I bought this season's outfit from a rack at C&A in 1988. But I don't feel that anybody else has been trying recently, either. The last time I had a good laugh on the slopes was in 1990 when a friend of mine, normally to be seen wearing well-cut double-breasted suits, turned up in a zebra-print one-piece. Sharon Campbell, fashion director for the Snow+Rock chain, agrees that recent skiwear has been "dead boring". And she has had great difficulty selling fashion items in the Nineties:

there are fewer skiers. "Those that are left are the serious enthusiasts - and, anyway, British skiers are conservative, and will always go for practical clothing made of waterproof, 'breathable' fabrics."

As you will have noticed, other European skiers take their outfits more seriously. And for Martin Phillips, who buys women's skiwear for C&A throughout Europe from its Düsseldorf office, spotting variations in taste is important: he can identify a skier's nationality at 100 paces. C&A's curiously named skiwear label, Rodeo, which dominates the UK market, is also sold on the Continent, but the garments to which it is attached differ.

"The big difference is between the German and French markets, which have almost nothing in common. The French like very classical, simple clothing, and natural materials; their market is dominated by 'technical' [sporting] skiwear. But the German market is much more fashion-oriented: they favour snowboarding styles, and go for those prints that I find so distasteful." He agrees with Sharon Campbell that "the style in Britain is now 'dressing down' rather than 'dressing up'. You can relate it to the high street where there's more classic, Escada-type fashion around, less of a hip, fashionable look."

British skiers' conservatism is partly a result of general high street austerity, but Phillips (who talks nostalgically about the Eighties, when people were "spending money like water on skiwear") adds two other causes. First, "because school skiing trips have been cut back so drastically, the influence of young people has weakened:

the same people are going skiing, and they're getting older". Second, snowboarding hasn't taken off to the same extent in the UK as on the Continent, and skiing fashion has recently looked to snowboarders for inspiration.

Austerity does tend to take the fun out of fashion, and snowboarders' styles haven't put it back. Their late-grunge, "street" look - baggy shapes in drab colours - wouldn't bring a smile to anybody's face, the only mild diversion being its reading material: the proudly displayed labels (Billabong, Fishpaw, Fat Face) and bizarre slogans (one C&A teenager's parka carries the message "A special design for your great pleasure to wear", another the more enigmatic "MCP-9169"). Similarly, in this year's racks of technical skiwear uniforms, the decorative elements are largely textual, each one carrying a handful of swing tickets ("the Christmas tree effect", C&A's Martin Phillips calls it) proclaiming the virtues of its hi-tech fabric. Competition for expensive, "breathable" Gore-tex is tough, since "Icel", "EcoTemp", "Superskin", "Enrunt GII", "Kaporous" and "Rhino Skin" not only live and breathe, but sing and dance, too.

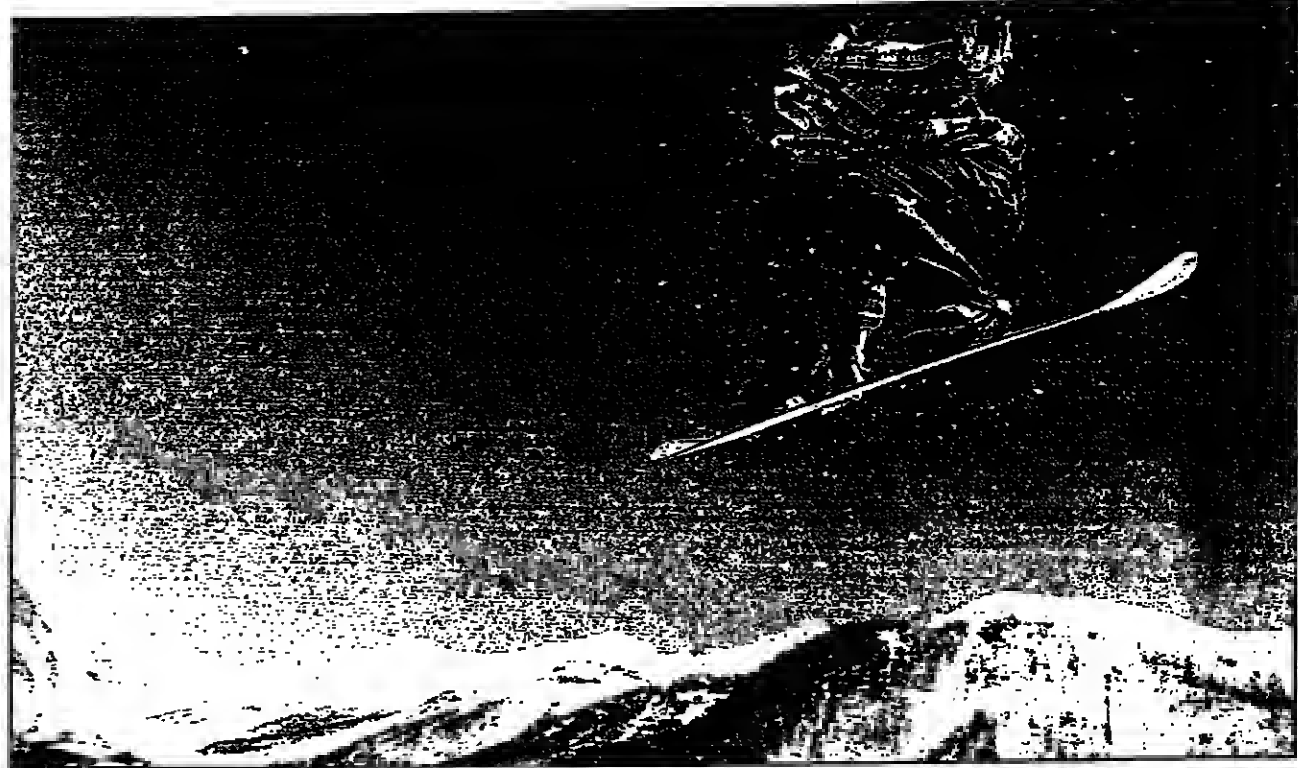
But the dark days are now over. I expressed some cynicism about next season's trends to Snow+Rock's Sharon Campbell: the Munich declaration that menswear would somehow combine snowboarding styles and technical skiwear under a buzz-word taken from this season's fashionable "carving" skis suggested desperation to me rather than confidence. And the "retro" look for women? That's

already retro: this season, Snow+Rock has been offering a one-piece "pilot" suit that looks like one of Amelia Earhart's cast-offs (price £479).

Campbell insists, however, that "next season the fashion element is coming back. Sales have been excellent at Snow+Rock this year, particularly of high-priced items: the demand for 'cheap-and-cheerful' outfits is declining, and the Mr Mountain look [the rugged, recession-style clothing adopted from mountaineers] has had its day. The manufacturers have had a very good season, too," she adds, "so there's more money - and confidence - going into their outfits for next year."

The "carving" look for men may be hard to define (the Swedish company, Mover, has embroidered a razor blade on one new jacket's lapel to establish its carving credentials), but Campbell identifies "a more streamlined shape, with a shorter jacket - half-way to a blouson gathered slightly at the waist"; the bright new colours include apple green and yellow. Retro outfits for women are a certainty: "the waisted jacket, with stretch trousers, looks very good on them," she says. And she is still optimistic about the tight-fitting "pilot" suits - a retro look made possible by a new technology for thinner insulation materials.

There will also be a retro look for men. But I don't think my puffy blue jacket and baggy black salopettes, 1988-style, are quite old enough yet to qualify. Perhaps I should do my bit to brighten up the slopes by buying something streamlined next season, maybe with a hint of peplum and soft smoked inserts? Perhaps not.



The snowboarder's late-grunge "street look" wouldn't bring a smile to anybody's face

PHOTOGRAPH: ALLSPORT

## Quietly sloping off with the family

Lucy Hodges spent half-term in the Italian Alps at the new resort of Montecampione

**I**talians ski as they drive: they're fast, pushy and dangerous. But don't let that put you off skiing the Italian Alps. We have just had a pleasurable half-term week at a small, purpose-built resort, Montecampione, perched above Lake Isèo, two-and-a-half hours north east of Milan. Yes, the crazy skiers and their snowboarding pals were out in force at weekends, whooping and jumping their way down the slopes, but the weekdays were blissfully quiet - empty mountains, no lift queues, and gallant attendants who made a point of helping women skiers off the chairlifts. What more could you ask?

Montecampione is a new resort, built in the last five years and still undergoing construction. Straddling three mountains, it boasts two hotels, hundreds of apart-

ments, ice-skating, and 25km of slopes, as well as bars, restaurants and eateries. Most important of all, it has an elaborate artificial snow-making system.

We had brilliant weather all week: azure blue skies, dazzling sunshine, luminous sunsets, not a snowflake in sight. It has apparently been thus for a while. After heavy snow earlier on, it has been warm and sunny this month. And so the snow-making machines have come into their own, pumping out the soft stuff to coat the ice with a layer of skiable powder. Those slopes that did not have machines were lethal - to be avoided at all costs.

We were lucky that Montecampione was about our level. There were black runs, notably Nera Canalone, a thin tube that descended at a right angle, and Rossa

Dosso Beccherie, which was manageable before the sun had transformed the layer of ice/snow into slush.

This was not much of a place for the experts. Nor was it a paradise for mogul-jumpers. In fact, there was not a mogul field to be seen, just the occasional accidental hump where a snow machine had spewed out too much product. Those seeking thrills did have slalom racing, however. The two steep slalom runs were patronised almost continuously by speed freaks and given a wide berth by the rest of us.

But the scenery was still pretty awesome. Once you had ascended to a peak, the ski area opened up into a lunar landscape of wide runs and rolling bowls with breathtaking views of the southern Alps tapering off layer by layer to a distant horizon. From the top of the highest runs you glimpsed the dark water of the lake below.

Our week was transformed by Mimo, a ski instructor who spoke ski-lingo English. Like many skiers, we are stuck in an intermediate rut, able to parallel-ski down most slopes but only in a hesitating and inelegant fashion. Mimo reminded us about raising and lowering our trunks and holding our arms out as if we were carrying a tea tray. In between lessons we worked at pretending to be waiters on skis.

We travelled to Montecampione as independent skiers, swapping a two-bedroom timeshare in Plymouth, New Hampshire, for a studio flat in our Italian development. It was the most convenient location of any ski resort we have stayed in, being situated just above a chairlift and

the ski pass office. Another of its great advantages, for someone who suffers from altitude sickness and has spent many unhappy hours feeling ill in Colorado, was that it was low, 1,827 metres, probably another reason for the dearth of snow.

The main drawback was a lack of eating places. Food figures large on any skiing agenda. Our bit of the resort contained a pizzeria where we ate three times and a trattoria where we ate once. Full stop. Otherwise you had to venture down the treacherous 11km of hairpin bends to Lovara, where there was more choice. We did find one family-run establishment locally, the Legazzuolo, which provided hearty home-made stuffed pastas and rich stews, and good red vino da tavola. It was a great antidote to the pizzeria.

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### World guide to where to be mugged

**T**heft threats around the world, according to the Foreign Office Travel Advice Unit (0171-238 4503):

**Indonesia:** Be alert. There has been an increase in petty crime against foreigners, including several incidents of knife attacks in the town of Brastagi in Sumatra and while climbing Mount Sibayak nearby. (The *Independent* comments that one of our correspondents fairly recently spent four peaceful days in Brastagi, "a friendly, quiet little town. The place where you really need to watch out for yourself is Medan, an hour's bus ride away. People in Brastagi will warn you that foreigners in this big city are invariably hassled, pickpocketing is rife and mugging common.")

**Iran:** There has recently been a number of cases of tourists being asked for identification by bogus policemen, who have then made off with the visitors' wallets and currency. Keep passports separate from other valuables.

**Madagascar:** There is a

danger of inugging and pickpocketing in urban areas. Precautions should be taken in crowded areas such as the popular Antananarivo market. Do not carry excessive amounts of money or wear jewellery, wristwatches, etc. It is advisable to carry a photocopy of your passport.

**Sierra Leone:** There has been an increase in reported incidents of armed robbery in the past six months.

**Swaziland:** There is a growing number of muggings, burglaries and car thefts, with expatriates being targeted. Several vehicles have been taken at gunpoint. It is inadvisable to pick up hitchhikers.

**Tanzania:** Incidents of mugging and theft are common, especially on public transport and beaches. Food should not be accepted from strangers as it may be drugged. Armed car thefts, particularly of four-wheel-drive vehicles, occur fairly frequently, and may be accompanied by personal violence.

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Like the Carlsberg claim - "probably the best lager in the world" - BA's assertion is an easy one to make: there is no scientific standard for judging mass-produced lager or air travel. But for British long-haul leisure travellers surveyed by *Austravel*, "the world's favourite" barely rates a mention.

The questionnaire, completed by 15,000 flyers, covered five categories: more than 20 airlines. For politeness, *Austravel* has published only the top 10 in

countless British Airways ads each category. British Airways scrapes in at number 10 for "helpfulness and manner of cabin crew", to BA's chagrin, its charter rival Britannia is third, behind Singapore Airlines and All Nippon Airlines of Japan. These also rate highly in the categories where BA is absent: catering, comfort, entertainment and value for money. The last category was won easily by All Nippon, which may want to adopt the slogan: "We'll take more care of you."

### Bargain of the week

The freedom of Newcastle-upon-Tyne: fly to the city with Gill Airways (0191-214 6666) - for example from Aberdeen, Belfast or Düsseldorf - keep hold of your boarding pass,

and the airline ticket deal at Newcastle airport will give you a ticket for the Metro system to take you from the airport station to anywhere on Tyne-side. The offer runs for the whole of March.



San Sebastián - a sensual surfeit of sights, sounds and tastes

PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD PASMORE/STW

# Basque out of the shade

**T**his is, and yet isn't, Spain. The crowds of people taking an evening stroll through the old town, stopping off for a glass of wine, some tapas and a chat are doing what Spaniards do, but they're doing it more quietly, less demonstratively, and they're wearing overcoats and carrying umbrellas.

Contrary to the popular saying, the rain in Spain falls mainly here, on the northern coast, which is why tourist brochures describe the local weather euphemistically as "mild and pleasant". Surprisingly, it was the climate that first marked San Sebastián out as a tourist resort in the mid-19th century, attracting Queen Isabella II and her court away from the summer heat of Madrid to this elegant town, recently rebuilt after a disastrous fire and blessed with a beautiful beach. It's appropriately named *la concha* (the shell), and it forms a perfect, semicircular bay, whose entrance is protected from the worst excesses of the Atlantic by a tiny island.

I've got a soft spot for *la concha*. Twenty-odd years ago, I spent my first ever night in Spain sleeping on it, lulled to sleep by the sound of the waves and the effects of a bottle of wine that I vaguely remember costing 10 pesetas. That was in August, mind you. This time (in winter), I'm only too happy to find a comfortable bed in a hotel and stroll down to the beach after breakfast.

San Sebastián is the capital of a culture that has finally stamped its name back on the map ... as well as the gastronomic dictionary, writes Mick Webb

It's on a Saturday morning like this,

out of season, that you realise how a beach in summer can be a mass human barbecue. But today it's a park where people are walking their dogs, jogging, reading the paper, while from this esplanade a less active contingent of us are happy to lean on the railings and simply watch.

Basque culture has reasserted itself, and the language banned for 40 years by Franco is now flourishing. The city has acquired a new name, Donostia; the names above the shops and bars are full of tongue-twisting clusters of consonants - Zumacalarriqui, Goikotexa; and the street signs are in two languages. Donostia has played its part in ETA's long and violent campaign for independence from the Spanish state and, on a damp Friday evening, the rush-hour traffic was slowed more than usual by a demonstration of 100 or so people moving silently and purposefully through the city centre. They were holding up placards with photos of their loved ones, ETA activists, who have been incarcerated in far-off Ceuta and Melilla. It's a regular Friday event,

watched with mild but respectful interest by shoppers and drinkers, and it reveals the other side of a city that's best known for a host of international music and film festivals, and as a rather upmarket seaside resort.

The city has its fair share of interesting museums, and churches, as well as some excellent walks, and I'd thoroughly recommend a couple of hours spent watching the game of pelota. It's fast, furious and fun, particularly the variety called *remonte*, which involves a wicker basket attached to the players' wrists, from which a ball is propelled against a wall at phenomenal speed. And if you think the game sounds odd, its singularity is matched by the betting - old tennis balls stuffed with peseta notes are thrown between spectators and bookmakers through the ever-thickening cigarette smoke.

The Basques are the great chefs of Spain, and here on their home turf their art flourishes. There are 11 Michelin stars scattered around the city's many restaurants, and the two best-known practitioners, Juan Mari Arzak and Pedro Subijana, convert

traditional recipes into the most elaborate modern dishes. Just a glance at the menu of El Akelarre, Sr Subijana's restaurant, sends our taste buds into an uncontrollable spin: fricassée of lambs' sweetbreads with vegetables and sautéed squids; hake fillets with clams in green sauce; citrus fruits in puff pastry with caramel; fresh cheese ice-cream.

At the other end of the price range, in the bars of the old town, you can eat well from the varied and colourful *pinxtos*, as tapas are called here, though it is a good idea to like fish - particularly cod and hake, which reappear in 100 different guises and sauces.

The Donostiaras are extraordinary consumers of fresh fish - they consume seven or eight times as much as most other Europeans. The fish market is one of the shrines of the city. This originated by necessity. Historically, the poverty of this part of the Basque region meant that the only readily available source of food was fish, and the only major source of work was fishing. Now, by an irony of economic development, the relatively

well-off residents of San Sebastián can afford to buy fish, and to use it as the basis of the new Basque cuisine.

But there is another reason why the gastronomic arts have taken root here, hidden behind heavy doors. San Sebastián is full of gastronomic clubs, whose members gather together to talk and drink, but mainly to cook, rivaling each other in the preparation of delicious meals.

San Sebastián is very much the pretty face of the Basque country. If you go inland, the hills that provide such a scenic backdrop to the city conceal the valleys that themselves hide the rather ugly and forbidding villages crammed into them. I remembered from my first visit that what was odd about the interior of the Basque country was the way that traditional farming and quite large industrial plants and factories existed side by side. In these post-industrial days it looks even weirder. I drove up out of San Sebastián into a faint coating of snow along mountain roads, passing abandoned paper mills, gaunt iron skeletons that might have been created by the great Basque sculptor, Txillida. I had a very clear recollection from my earlier visit of the lurid yellow and green rivers created by industrial effluent from the mills - and the hideous smell that arose from them. Not now, though; they are clean enough and fresh enough to star in any advert or grace any tourist brochure.

## A pilgrim's slow progress

Rob Gaisford seeks salvation in a Spanish stroll

**W**e stood still, eyeing one another warily and intensely, each waiting for the other to make the first move. The bull's horns gleamed, burnished bronze, under the declining Spanish sun. The only cape I had was made of waterproof plastic, folded in my rucksack. I was an unwilling, unprepared *torero* against one of nature's finest beasts. The same scene must have been enacted thousands of times over the centuries in this hot, unyielding land. The outcome could have been too horrible to contemplate had not a six-year-old boy appeared at that moment and ordered the animal

into a nearby barn for milking. I had come, by sea from Plymouth to Santander and thence by train to León to walk for some of the way along the Camino de Santiago. After 30 kilometres, I had reached Hospital de Orbigo, where I found this test of my manhood blocking the route. Her name was Margarita.

This village is on the old pilgrim route from the Pyrenees to Santiago de Compostela. Santiago, or St James, was not a great success at converting Spain, but the discovery of his body, several hundred years after his death, caused Santiago de Compostela to become an important centre of pilgrimage from all

over Europe. Mine was intended to be a short walking holiday, not a pilgrimage, but I found myself drawn increasingly to the notion of reaching Santiago, and buried calculations established that I could just do it if I walked 30km a day. Pilgrims have a certain status in that part of Spain - passing motorists beep horns in recognition and small children shout "¡Ole, peregrino!" My original, hedonistic motivation became a more ascetic determination to complete the journey.

I awoke early the next morning in my simple inn at Hospital de Orbigo, dislodged a dozy insect from my eye socket and let myself out. I made my way over the longest pilgrim bridge on the route. The sun was just rising behind me, lighting up the distant, misty hills and getting a welcome from crowing cocks and howling dogs. A church clock struck eight, twice.

A Spaniard, José, then a Frenchman, Jean-Louis, overtook me, walking briskly in contrast to my uneasy progress - the result of the previous day's exertions. "Thirty kilometres on the first day is too much," observed the latter.

At Astorga, I bought a double-length walking-stick adorned with the inevitable cockleshell and a large, hollow representation of a medieval water-bottle. After Astorga, the flat plain known as La Maragateria gives way to hillier country. There are long distances between villages.

After 30km, I reached Rabanal de Camino, where I was given a solicitous welcome at a hostel, and greeted with astonishment by José and Jean-Louis, who had overtaken me so long ago. There is a rigid grading system in Spanish hotels. The best are probably the comfortable, state-run *paradores*; the humblest



Cross purposes: a pilgrim reaches the end of her journey to Santiago de Compostela. PHOTOGRAPH: BRIAN HARRIS

are the simple *fondas*. A hostel is slightly more expensive and better furnished than a *fonda*. In this one, my room included half a bath. By walking up the wall above the taps, I could get most of my torso submerged. Bliss.

I took my stiff and painful leave just before dawn to start the ascent into the mountains to the west. Some 350 metres higher and 6km further on, my bruised and swollen feet led me past the deserted village of Foncabán. I remembered that there was said to be an iron cross near here. Traditionally, pilgrims add a stone to the pile at its foot. Dutifully, I tossed a pebble on to what seemed a modest mound and passed on. A little further on, I was confronted by a giant pyramid of stones, spilling out on to the road. I hunted for another pebble, but earlier travellers had entirely denuded the ground of loose stones. I settled for replacing a dislodged rock.

The wind was howling over these hills and rain threatened as I reached the village of Marjarín. It is uninhabited save for Tomas, who, with his wife, runs a small refuge for pilgrims. He had seen me approaching and, as I turned off the road, he appeared at his door and rang a clattery old bell, shouting "¡Bienvenido, peregrino!" with such enthusiasm that further introductions were

unnecessary. I accepted a coffee, which was a lukewarm liquid in a chipped tin mug. It was disgusting. Jean-Louis and José had already been there an hour and decided to set off again, leaving me to inspect some of the religious artefacts that decorated, and probably insulated, the walls. I went on my way and found, to my astonishment, that I was able to walk faster and more

easily. After 20 minutes, I passed the others, explaining that I dared not stop and asking what they thought Tomas put in his coffee.

This burst of energy lasted several hours and saw me down the road that runs through the village of El Acebo to within sight of Molinaseca, where I found a room at Hostal El Palacio, beside the Romanesque bridge over the river Meruelo.

An early night, and then off again at eight the next morning. This time at a snail's pace as I tried to force my unhappy feet into speed. After a couple of hours, their objections lessened and I picked up speed. I stopped only for coffee in Foncabán and then hastened on again.

Flatter now, the road took me to the ancient village of Locabelos, I paused for a beer in an indifferent bar, where elderly men were playing a noisy game of cards, and then attacked the last section of the day's march, to Villafraña. By the time I got there, my blistered feet had all but beaten my pilgrim will. Then I rounded a corner and stopped in my tracks. The declining sun reflected from a gleaming tiled roof. On one side of the road stood a welcoming, only partly occupied *parador*; on the other, one of nature's weirdest beasts. I gave in immediately.

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## Are we nearly there?

Prison museums for children: jails they won't want to escape from

Clink Prison Museum, 1 Clink Street, Bankside, London SE1 (0171-403 6515) The grim history of the original Clink Prison and the Bankside brothels is suitably moody entertainment for a rainy afternoon. See scenes of inmates catching rats and manacled prisoners begging for food, each with a bill and chain trailing behind them. Exhibits include old torture chains and thumb screws. Open seven days a week. 10am-6pm. Prices: adults £3.50, concessions and children £2.50, family £8.

The Galleries of Justice, Shire Hall, High Pavement, Lace Market, Nottingham (015952 0555) Prison wardens and court ushers played by costumed interpreters guide visitors around the exhibition. Includes a reconstruction of the trial of George Jackson, who in 1832 was accused of burning down a local salt mill during the Reform Act riots. Open Tues-Sun. 10am-5.30pm (last admission 4pm). Prices: adults £4.25, concessions and children £2.50, family ticket £11.95, children under five, free.

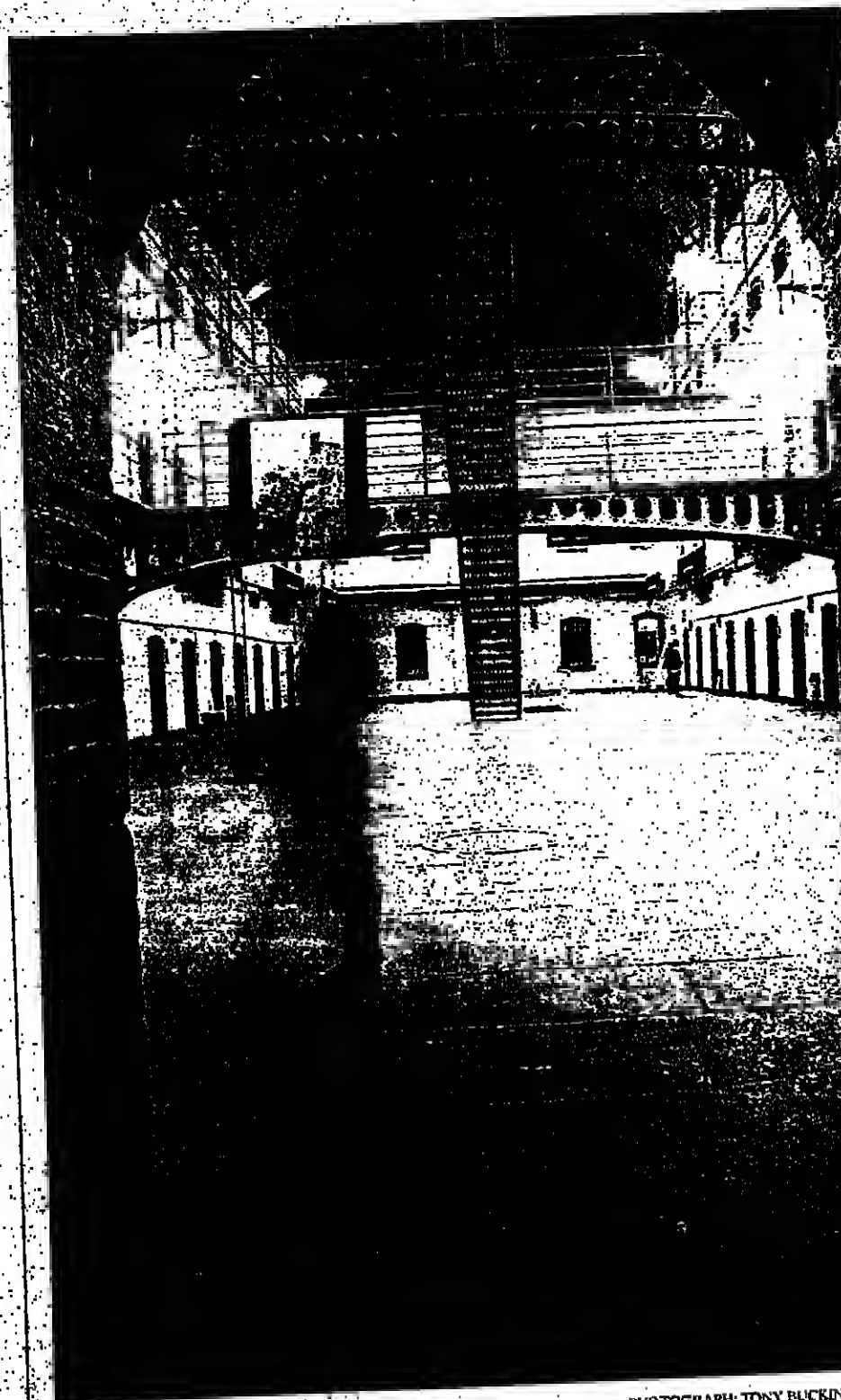
Dover Old Town Gaol, Biggin Street, Dover, Kent (01304 242766) Dover's fully restored prison houses a suitably grim collection of inmates whose crimes include smuggling, murder and, in the case of several small boys, rabbit theft. The "horror and the tragedy" the museum promises come via hi-tech talking beads and animation. Visitors can also witness a trial in the imposing Victorian courtroom, wander through the exercise yard and squeeze into a cell. Guided tours run hourly throughout the day. Open Wed-Sat, 10am-4.30pm, Sun. 2pm-4.30pm. Prices: adults £3.20, concessions and children £1.90, children under five, free.

Micklegate Bar Museum, Micklegate, York (01904 634436) Royal visitors to York traditionally arrived via Micklegate Bar, and it was customary to decorate its entrance with the heads of recently hanged traitors. The gatehouse is now home to an exhibition charting 800 years of York's history; displays include about 40 heads in various states of decay. Open Sat-Sun, 9am-6pm; from Easter until the end of October it will be open seven days a week 9am-6pm. Prices: adults £1.50, students and OAPs £1, under-16s accompanied by an adult 50p.

Cirencester Lock-up, Trinity Road, Cirencester, Key from the Corinium Museum, Park Street, Cirencester (01285 655611). Known locally as "the dumping house" because of its domed roof, the Lock-up is a tiny prison with two cells and only one window grille. It remains closed for much of the year: most visitors choose to peer in through the bars. Open by arrangement with the Corinium Museum (opens at the end of March - call first); November-March, Tues-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2pm-5pm; April-October, Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2pm-5pm. Prices: adults £1.60, concessions £1.40, students £1, children 80p, family ticket £4.

# Porridge mixed with politics

The Kilmainham Jail in Dublin sheds light on a dark age. By Alan Murdoch



PHOTOGRAPH BY TONY BUCKINGHAM

Dublin's Kilmainham Jail Museum brings a searing reality to the lives of its sometimes anonymous, sometimes famous inmates. It was, after all, the place where a *Who's Who* of Irish nationalist leaders, from Robert Emmet to Parnell to de Valera, heard the thud of metal doors clanging behind them.

In the past year, the once gloomy prison museum's permanent exhibition has been brought to life with theatrical flair and £1m of public funds to explain how famine, civil disorder and war came to land so many inside. Its balance of dignified treatment of the tragedy of Irish leaders' executions here and the opportunities to engage younger visitors through video-age techniques has recently been recognised with a Large Museum of the Year award from the Gulbenkian Foundation.

Kilmainham was the world's first jail used exclusively for political prisoners, yet its grey stone passages also provide the ideal cautionary trip back into stern Victorian times for harassed parents of adolescents.

The early prison "reformers" Jeremy Bentham and John Howard, zealots for extracting repentance and for the "fabrication of virtue", saw their vision given full rein here. They favoured harsh, hygienic and "fair" punishment as an alternative to the squalor of 18th-century prisons, in which more prisoners were killed by disease than by the ever-hungry gallows.

In the new display, "humane" refinements of hanging - largely through the longer-drop, quicker-farewell technique developed by Professor Samuel Haughton of Trinity College, Dublin - are explained in neck-tugging detail.

Young people are encouraged to take part in the age-old debate about hanging by casting a vote in a computer poll: they can then see, in graphic form on screen, the latest balance of visitors' opinions for and against, presented by age group in graphic form on screen.

In 1796 Kilmainham was rearranged on the principles of one prisoner, one cell - and soon became overcrowded. Convict

numbers soared during the famine in the late 1840s when the starving were imprisoned in their thousands for possession of stolen bread-and-butter, and theft of apples or even turnips. The prison's grim regime is clearly illustrated by the authorities' attitude towards rations. On discovering that prisoners got four ounces of bread more than workhouse inmates, an enraged inspector, Philip Priestly, demanded: "this alarming gap must be closed".

Even the mildest Victorian punishment aimed to exert maximum control over the inmate - and to ensure that the prisoner knew it. One exhibit is a cell-door eye-spy, revealing a miniature video of a confined woman's unnerved reaction to the warder's watching eye. And in an adjacent closed-circuit television room, visitors become warder-monitors of the jail and, eerily, of themselves.

As for political prisoners, after 1798, French-influenced United Irishmen were held here, as was Robert Emmet before his 1803 public execution; in 1848 Young Ireland rebels followed; then, in 1867, Fenians were incarcerated, betrayed by informers. After this, criminals were moved out, turning Kilmainham into a jail exclusively for political detainees.

In 1881, these included the nationalist leader Charles Stewart Parnell and his Land Leaguers, who defended Irish tenant farmers from evictions and rejected Westminster's Land Acts.

His release followed the 1882 Kilmainham Treaty, securing Parnell's co-operation with the British Prime Minister William Gladstone's Liberal government.

Kilmainham's climactic moment came in the 20th century, when 14 Easter Rising leaders were shot here between 3 and 12 May 1916. In a darkened passageway their family photographs, letters, pens and spectacles are laid out in individual spotlight alcoves, like shrines to the executed.

While the curator, Pat Cooke, acknowledges the value of a recent reassessment of 1916 by Irish historians, the museum avoids a didactic narrative. "We present the nationalist 'physical force' tradition

in its own terms and allow people to react in their own way," he says.

This means admitting to the complex, mixed backgrounds of the 1916 leaders. Some even had English parentage, a fact that contradicts the nationalist stereotype. Paradoxes continued when the jail changed hands.

British withdrawal left the prison controlled by pro-Treaty forces under Michael Collins, who appointed an IRA friend as governor over former comrades during the bloody 1922-1924 civil war. By November 1922, after Collins's death, Free State (pro-Treaty) forces were holding their own executions here.

Between April and September 1923, 300 anti-Treaty hardliners of the IRA women's division were imprisoned in Kilmainham and nearby Grangegorman (the main setting for Neil Jordan's film *Michael Collins*).

In time-honoured tradition, the women began tunnelling their way out, using metal spoons, but had got only a few feet before being discovered. After the women's release, Eamon de Valera, Sinn Féin leader (and opponent of Michael Collins during the civil war), later Taoiseach and President, became Kilmainham's final prisoner. He lived to see the building renovated by admiring volunteers in the Sixties. Today its dramatic associations continue. Key scenes from *In the Name of the Father*, featuring Daniel Day-Lewis as Gerry Conlon of the Guildford Four, were filmed here in 1993.

The Kilmainham Jail Museum, Dublin (003531 4535984), is at the junction of Inchicore Road and the South Circular Road, Dublin 8 (opposite the Irish Museum of Modern Art at Royal Hospital, Kilmainham).

Opening times: Monday to Friday 9.30am-5pm (last tour 75 minutes before closing). Guided tours only. Saturdays: closed in winter. Open Saturdays from 3 May. Sundays 10am-6pm (last tour 4.45pm.)

Admission: adults £2; senior citizens £1.50; children or students £1; family £5.

Bus routes: Nos 51, 51B, 78A, 79 from city centre.

Charlotte Packer

Block booking: the Kilmainham Jail Museum

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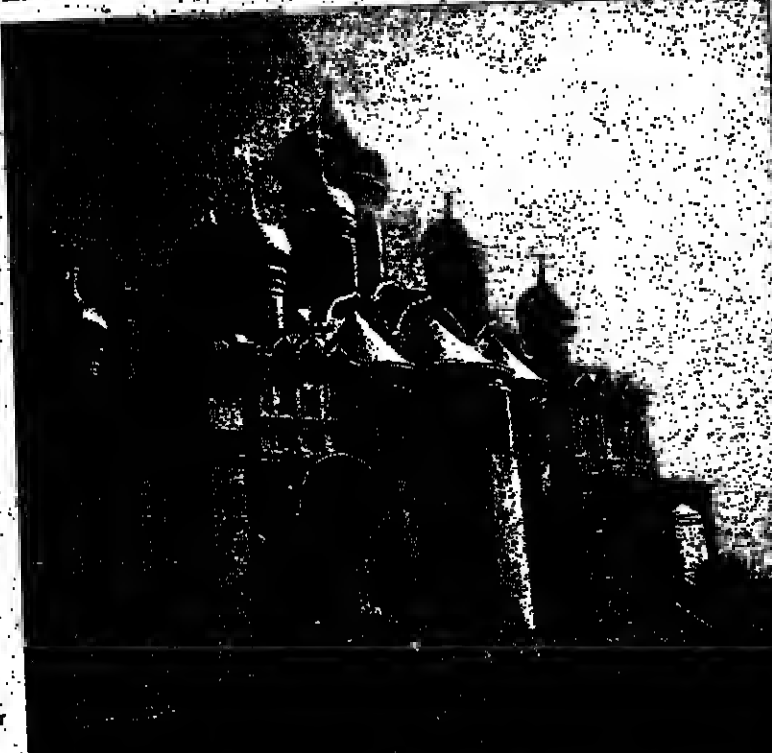
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DAY 3 St Petersburg. Morning free. Afternoon sailing.

DAY 4 Kazan. Today we sail across Lake Onega, making a stop at the beautiful island of Kizhi. Visit the imposing 22 domed Church of the Transfiguration, a marvel of 18th century Russian wooden architecture.

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DAY 6 Yaroslavl. We have the day to explore Yaroslavl, the oldest city on the Volga with its lovely riverfront and fine collection of merchant churches. See the Churches of Elijah the Prophet and the Transfiguration Cathedral.

DAY 7 Kostroma. One of the loveliest of the cities of the Golden Ring. The city retains its classical 18-19th century layout with wide streets and boulevards fanning out like the spokes of a wheel from a central square. Visit the Ipatievsky Monastery (now a museum) which was founded in the 14th century by the Zernov family; the forbearers of the Godunovs. Of special interest will be our visit to the outdoor museum village of "Berengovka".

DAY 8 Uglich. This historic Golden Ring city on the Volga has some fascinating sites within its Kremlin. See the cathedral, the Church of St Dmitry on the Blood and the Palace chamber.

DAY 9 Moscow. Sail along the Moscow Canal arriving in Moscow at lunch time. Afternoon shore excursions, entrance fees, port taxes, UK departure tax, local guides, Guest Lecturer, Tour Manager.

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Before heading back to the uncertainties of the present railway age, hunt through the twirling columns of the museum for Consort's Café – and a life-sustaining piece of sticky sponge as thick as a Roman wall. Unlike finding a train home, this is truly a piece of cake.

Yet you could easily remain unaware of the ring of history that resonates around Exeter. Unlike York, the wall here melts surreptitiously into the fabric of the place called *Ipsa Dummoniorum* by its first residents. The Roman wall is disguised variously as a foundation for a pedestrian walkway and a supporting superstructure for sundry council car parks, the modern equivalent of the huskel under which Exeter's light is hidden.

Arrive by that elusive train to Exeter Central, though, and finding the wall is easy. Two minutes from the definitely dull station, and apparently average Ocken Street,

you ascend to Northernhay – and more than a millennium of history. The “hay” component of the name is a Saxon term for an enclosure of greenery. Exeter has a handsome handful of these. Even in the dying days of February, each is flickering into life as the first spring flowers nicely emerge.

Northernhay is claimed to be the first public park in Britain, dedicated in 1612. But the term “park” does scant justice to the curvaceous, hercaceous expanse sculpted by Romans, Saxons and Normans.

Each wave of visitors has left its mark on the space – notably the

Romans, who in AD200 beefed up the wooden stockade that first protected Exeter with a formidable wall 30ft high and 10ft thick. They conjoined the fortification from frozen lava lying virtually beneath their feet, where millions of years ago the gentle terrain was shattered by a mild (this is Devon, after all) eruption. Now it runs like an errant contour through Northem-hay.

You see plenty of evidence of the grey, volcanic rock as you climb towards Athelstan's Tower. This turret was actually built by the Normans rather than the Saxon

monarch; they generously named it for the king who had reinforced the stone curtain after the Danes breached it around the end of the first millennium. Nowadays, the main purpose of the rough red sandstone tower is to draw the visitor to one of the highest points in the city, from where the sheer good fortune of Exeter becomes clear. In every direction, handsomely graded hills rise from the winter haze.

The Crown Court now occupies the castle grounds, rendering the enclosure out-of-bounds to law-abiding visitors. But the original

Norman gate is still in the public domain, and slams its way on to the skyline. The Norman arc above the entrance is topped by two triangle-tipped Saxon windows. Surely some structural mistake, since the Normans succeeded the Saxons? The answer seems to be that this was an early example of cowboy building.

"The Normans employed Saxon workmen to do the work," says Sara, one of the volunteer guides who usher visitors around Exeter in all weathers. "They probably finished it off in the style they were used to, while the Normans weren't looking."

On the scale of outrages perpetrated against Exeter, dodgy Saxons and their handiwork hardly registers. The main offender was the Luftwaffe, which visited gratuitous horror on the city as part of the so-called Baedeker raids in 1942. Having failed to wipe out military targets in Britain, the German bombers turned their sights on the country's heritage. Exeter was the softest of targets in the (guide) book.

The Fifties followed: the Nazis with a salvo of demolition, as you discover when you try to follow the gentle curve of the wall. Parts survived the figurative Nazi jackboot

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# Cornish cream

Candida Lloyd watches the world go by in Polruan – where cuteness comes with character

When, in 1478, the King sent his sergeant-at-arms to enforce the law among wilful members of the community at Fowey estuary in south-east Cornwall, the man was dispatched back to Looe minus his ears. Today you can expect a friendlier welcome, particularly at the charming village of Polruan, which huddles on one side of the mouth of the Fowey estuary. The heart of the village is made up of a mass of stone cottages divided by a network of narrow streets. Yet despite the cute looks and the consequent summer hordes of visitors, this is still very much a place with its own character. You see it at its empty best at this time of year. An attractive harbour overlooks the estuary where a flotilla of boats is criss-crossed by container vessels laden with china clay. Opposite the village is the pretty town of Fowey, accessible by a 50p passenger ferry. Reaching Polruan by car is not easy. A tiny vehicle ferry operates from further up the estuary; otherwise you have to take part in a 40-minute cross-country rally through the narrow back lanes. But once you fight your way through, the stresses of working life evaporate; you can put on jeans and a big jumper, and flop. The two pubs in the village are subtly demarcated: one

**‘The place seems like an updated version of Under Milk Wood’**

has a wide range of food; the other a wide range of local characters. There are also a couple of general stores, tea shops, and a bakery offering pastries for 60p. The place seems like an updated Cornish version of *Under Milk Wood*.

A boat-building business still operates in the harbour, along with a scattering of fishermen. In Polruan's heyday vast quantities of pilchards were brought in to be salted and pressed in stacks up to 6ft high. The yards, known as ‘pilchard palaces’, where the stacking took place can still be seen, attached to houses along the waterfront. Another feature of the village is a 14th-century stone blockhouse, which was linked to a similar fort on the opposite side of the estuary by a heavy chain. To prevent pirates and enemy ships from entering the port the chain was simply yanked up.

But the best thing about Polruan is the water. You can spend hours just looking out on the estuary, watching the river trade. Apart from gawping, walking is the other reason for visiting Polruan. Follow the coast east and you immediately step out on to some of the country's finest cliffs. Phoning into deep valleys or up into rocky outcrops, the walking can be tough going, but the views are always glorious. Inland, several beautiful paths trace the side of the estuary. The best known is the four-mile circular Hali Walk created by the Mohun family of Hali, who were the local bigwigs in 1585. The path was a kind of 16th-century Disneyland. Local serfs cut out the walkway, which zigzags down

the steep hillside to the river, and planted vast numbers of trees and shrubs for the benefit of promenading ladies and gentlemen.

The walk takes you through the centre of Fowey, which manages to keep the

number of shops selling sailing shoes and pasties down to a bearable level, and past the home of Daphne du Maurier, many of whose novels, including *Rebecca*, were inspired by the area.

But the most sensational

walk starts at the 16th-century bridge at the hamlet of Lerryn, several miles out of Polruan. A riverside track goes down to the ancient Eithy Quay, where sail harges used to bring their wares. The tide laps into Lerryn Creek twice a day, bring-



Bay watch: from Polruan, left, it's a 50p ferry to Fowey

ing with it the scent of the sea. The five-mile circular walk twists and turns alongside the creek and through some woodland which was recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086. The path eventually turns inland at the old river quay at St Winnow.

At the hamlet is a church which contains a shrine to two men from St Winnow. From what must have been a simple rural lifestyle, the two local boys grew up to become Army officers and ended up fighting thousands of Zulu warriors in the battle of Rorke's Drift. After the church the track goes past a ruined mill and

ends up at an 18th-century manor house. Hikers should ensure that their return to Lerryn, across a set of stepping stones, coincides with the licensing hours. At the local pub you can enjoy a pint of good Cornish ale. Alternatively, you can buy mugs of tea and coffee from the village shop, and if it's warm enough, sit on the nearby green, and watch the birds.

*Walks in the area: National Trust booklet, Coast of Cornwall series No 21, Fowey. Tourist office: The Ticket Shop (in the Post Office), 4 Custom House Hill, Fowey (01726 833616).*

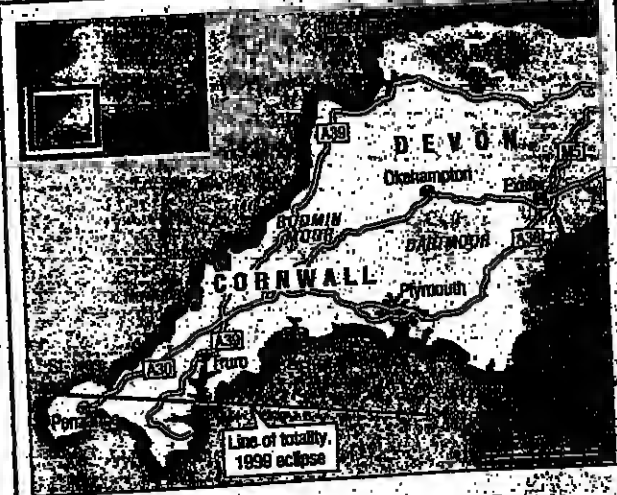
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### West Country diary

Holiday bookings for Cornwall in 1999 will be directly influenced by an astronomical event in Asia later this month. The total solar eclipse over Mongolia on 10 March is bound to fuel interest in the next-but-one total eclipse of the sun, visible over west Cornwall at 11.11am on 11 August, 1999. The central line of totality passes just north of Penzance and south of Falmouth (see map, above). For an excellent guide to the eclipse, complete with a viewer, send a cheque for £5.95, payable to the Royal Greenwich Observatory, to The Observatory, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0EZ. Accommodation is likely to be scarce. For lists of properties, call the tourist information centres in Penzance (01736 62207, also covering St Ives), Helston (01326 365431) and Falmouth (01326 312300). If you cannot make it to Cornwall, then you will still get a good view of a partial eclipse from elsewhere in the UK. Even in Britain's northernmost town, Lerwick in Shetland, there will be a partial eclipse covering 65 per cent of the sun.

Less cosmic events in Devon and Cornwall this year include the following (contact numbers for further details shown in brackets):  
1 May: Padstow 'Obby 'Oss celebrations – May Day custom marking the coming of spring (01841 533449).  
8 May: Helston Flora Day the spring celebration moves west for the sequence of Furry Dances (01326 572082).  
15-17 May: Devon County Show, Westpoint Showground, near Exeter (01392 444777).  
23 May-7 June: English Riviera Dance Festival, Victoria Hotel Ballroom and other venues in Torquay (01895 632143).  
6-22 June: Golowan Festival, Penzance (01736 331933).  
3-20 July: Exeter Festival (01392 265200).  
25 August: Newlyn Fish Festival (01736 62207).  
22-25 August: Wadebridge Folk Festival, re-named this summer after 24 years as the Cornwall Folk Festival (01208 831123).  
8-20 September: St Ives September Festival (01736 795003 or 01736 66077).  
8 October: Tavistock Goose Fair (01822 613529).  
6 November: Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival (01278 429288).



هكذا من الأصل



# The Primrose Hill mob

Anna Pavord meets the men from the Garden Rescue Service

"Gardeners to Babylon", it says on the front of St John Stephens' milk-float. He's proud of the milk-float. "My most famous idea in the bath yet" he says. Mr Stephens runs the Garden Rescue Service, based in Primrose Hill, north London, and the green-and-yellow float, packed with tools, plants and garden rubbish, is a familiar sight in the streets of Highgate, Islington and parts of Hackney. Sometimes it even strays as far as Notting Hill Gate or Chelsea, where outlying window-boxes get the St John service.

But why a milk-float? "It does less damage to our humps than anything else I could think of," he replies. The pedal bikes with trailers they used previously were limited. They couldn't carry ladders, and hadn't enough flat space to ferry plants about. The float has a battery, charged up overnight, and a big, flat base for plants. "When we stop at traffic lights, people try to buy stuff off the back of the float."

A big blackboard on the wall of their office - one of the waiting-rooms at the old Primrose Hill railway station - shows what the Garden Rescue Service is up to at the moment: landscaping, design, lighting, turfing, fencing, trellis, clearance, pruning. They provide plants and build planters to put them in. They make pond covers and storage bins from recycled timber. They have a little wildlife park at 3B Goodsway, London NW1. They pick up

garden rubbish and deliver it to Camden's recycling centre, where it is used to feed a power station. They advise on "integrated pest management" (using bugs to catch bugs) and run a small garden library for the use of their clients.

"We're not just a maintenance service," says St John firmly, tugging his forage cap even lower down over his eyes. "We like to feel we are giving these gardens back to their owners, for them to enjoy and work in as well. We help with things they can't tackle." Such as runaway wisteria, overgrown rambling roses, leaking ponds.

City gardens have their own special problems: earth that is sometimes little more than ground-up bricks and mortar, drought, shade, cats - especially cats. And no side entrances. Only 20 per cent of the gardens that St John and his two team leaders, Leo and Josh, go to have direct access. The rest of them can be reached only through the house.

That means quantities of polythene sheet to cover the hall carpet, owners chafing anxiously, all rubbish packed hygienically in black plastic bin-liners. "Oh yes," says Leo, nodding his fair hair extensions (they are pulled back into a pony-tail). "We are very skilled at going through houses."

St John's "moment of epiphany", as he puts it, happened on an allotment in Scotland. He funded his way through the University of East Anglia by working as a



More than a maintenance service: the rescue team (left to right) St John Stephens, Josh and Leo

PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW BULTMAN

chef, then wandered northwards, settling finally with a sister in Edinburgh. He got the allotment to grow herbs, became good at growing things, then picked up work as a jobbing gardener. But the cold drove him south again and here he is in Primrose Hill, with - he seems slightly surprised that it's so - his own business.

The typical client, he says, is aged 28-50, professional, short of time but interested in the garden. "Publishers," puts in Leo. "Yes," says St John. "Lots of publishers." And is it easy to agree with a client what needs to be done in the garden? "Oh yes," says St John. "But we don't always agree amongst ourselves."

And they don't spin a web of mystery around garden design. "Look," says St John. "Design has to come from function. A London garden has to be an extension of the house. So you just have to ask people what this room is for." "Courtyard and curtain," says Leo. "Courtyard and curtain," agrees St John. I begin to feel this is a mantra that has passed me by. St John explains. The courtyard is the outside, living bit, the curtain the screen of plants that protects the courtyard from being overlooked, or screens off a bad view. They are the two most important elements in any design.

My trip ends with a ceremonial visit to the milk-float, parked on the far side of the railway bridge. As it sits there, bug-eyed, unthreatening, with its cargo of rakes and compost, wisteria prunings and winter heathers, you realise what a clever piece of PR it represents. Leo and Josh are relieved that St John has finally decided against adding a couple of three-wheeled vehicles to the transport fleet. "Inherently unstable" is the verdict; "inherently uncool" the sub-text.

The Garden Rescue Service, 123 Regent's Park Rd, London NW1 (0171-586 7714), is open Wednesdays and Fridays.

"Can you tell me whether planting a wisteria in a large container such as a half-barrel is likely to be successful?" asks Caroline Benwell of Herne Hill, London. "I long for a wisteria dripping my balcony, but my surveyor has vetoed one in the ground (subsidence, cracks, drains etc). If not a wisteria, could you suggest another climber (a vine, a hop?) that might be happy in a container for many years? I want something that will be really happy for long as it's fed, watered, and loved. I did grow a Clematis montana in a half-barrel and persuaded myself that it didn't know it was in prison, but when I eventually planted it properly, it positively exploded into growth and I felt guilty at having deprived it of freedom for so long."

My own feeling is that a wisteria is unlikely to be happy for years in a half-barrel. If it is to drape Ms Benwell's balcony it has a lot of work to do, and it is difficult to imagine that a half-barrel would provide sufficient spark. But there may be



## CUTTINGS

wisterias whose loving owners can prove otherwise. If there are, I'd like to hear from them.

Gardening Which? asked the same question, replied that wisteria would grow in a tub, but would be stunted, though, being confined, it might come into flower more quickly than young wisterias usually do. I waited eight years for the first bloom on my *Wisteria venusta* (not in a tub).

The most successful climber I have ever seen in a container is an *Actinidia chinensis* which stretches to extraordinary lengths from a terrace. A/B Bala jar on the roof garden of Rick Mather, the architect. It is the vine commonly called Chinese gooseberry, which in

warmer climates produces kiwi fruit. When suited, it will grow to 30ft. The leaves are handsome, dark green and heart-shaped. It's worth growing as a foliage plant alone and since Ms Benwell mentioned a vine and a hop as alternatives to the wisteria, she presumably does not mind doing without flowers. When the actinidia is established, she could grow a clematis (in a separate barrel) to scramble up through it.

The Alpine Garden Society is holding an early spring show today (12pm-4.30pm) at Mark Hall School, First Avenue, Harlow, Essex. Frillaries, dwarf geraniums, saxifrages, wild cyclamen and primulas will be among the flowers put up for competition at this show. Admission £1.

The Royal National Rose Society will hold its annual prize-giving demonstrations today and tomorrow (11am-4pm) at The Gardens of the Rose, Chiswell Green, Herts (01727 850461). Admission £4.

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# all consuming

## Not such super markets

Getting a bargain isn't so easy, reports Debbie Davies

Everyone wants a bargain. The supermarkets have thousands on offer. But do we get what we bargain for? The Consumers' Association says the proliferation of price cuts, free gifts and bonus points in supermarkets today actually confuses prices and makes price comparison and shopping around more difficult. Latest figures suggest it has a point.

AC Nielsen, a market research company, says supermarket shopping habits have changed surprisingly fast over the past two years. One-third of us used to shop around between supermarkets; now only one in four does so. Our eye has moved instead to loyalty card bonus points and in-store promotions. Two years ago less than two-thirds of us always looked out for special price offers; today, 85 per cent of us shop this way. Our interest may be in filling our trolleys with promotions from the Olympiad of special deals on display; the reality is that the proportion we buy on promotion has hardly changed. Of the shopper's trolley, Nielsen says, last year 21.8 per cent of groceries selected were on promotion compared with 21.2 per cent the previous year.

So a shopping environment that makes big promises about giving so much away free does not necessarily mean more savings for shoppers. Worse, it can cost you money.

Clive Vaughan, retail director with Verdict, a company that studies supermarkets, says that there comes a point at which more price promotion is counter-productive for shoppers. "Faced with a kaleidoscope of signs, customers can lose touch with price positioning," he says. At this point, according to the Consumers' Association's theory on confusion pricing, shoppers have no choice but to stick with a brand of retailer or product they know in the hope that the familiar can be relied on to offer the best value for money.

In practice it is easy to see how the supermarkets' torrent of promotions

and price cuts can leave you bewildered and even out of pocket. This is what happened to me when I went on a supermarket sweep in search of bargains:

● Information overload. Three items I bought registered a higher price at the check-out than that advertised on the shelf. Providing you know the correct price, stores will check your information and correct their mistake, as they did in my case, or risk falling foul of misleading price legislation. Supermarkets rely on staff to synchronise prices displayed on shelves with those charged at the check-out. This means thousands of changes in store every week: Tesco claims it offers 2,000 price promotions in addition to 600 lowest price deals; Sainsbury runs a more sedate 1,000 special promotions, but the entire offer changes every week. With supermarkets open seven days and 24-hour opening mooted, Nick Adcley, head of in-store marketing and promotion at Sainsbury, admits: "There are times when the supermarket's shelf tickets do not tally with prices charged at the check-out. Electronic shelf-edge pricing is the ultimate thermostat on promotions, allowing supermarkets to turn offers on and off, up and down, electronically, with simultaneous changes across the point-of-sale program and the shelf edge, but the cost of installation means that this may be some way away. More likely are hand-held scanners which will roam the store with you, flashing promotional messages at you as you shop."

● The missed opportunity. Common sense tells you that everyone will pick up the free product when they are buying something on the promise of "buy one, get one free" - a "bog off" as the trade calls it. In fact, manufacturers such as Bird's Eye, which run "bog off" on everyday grocery lines, know that between 5 and 20 per cent of shoppers will miss out on the free product, effectively paying twice what they should have for buying the single item. Like the National Lot-



The supermarkets' torrent of promotions can leave you bewildered

tery's unclaimed millions, every supermarket must have its stock of unclaimed freebies. It would be simple to rectify. "Buy one, get one free" offers could be banded together, or the supermarket point-of-sale terminals could be programmed to relay a message at the check-out that the customer is entitled to a free item, rather than the current system which comes into play to deduct the second item only when the customer takes it. I missed out on free hot cross buns, frozen vegetables and cheese cake, all on "buy one, get one free" promotion, because I did not see the signs or was not reading the promotional messages carefully enough. And don't expect staff at the check-out to tip you off. Even when I tried buying some of the most heavily promoted "three for two" offers, no one told me that when you buy two you can take another pack for free.

● In the dark. Supermarkets are selective about how they advertise deals and special prices around the

store. Confectionery promotions, such as Tesco's current promotion on Lindt chocolate, which allows you to buy one and get another at half price, would seem highly relevant at the kiosk you typically find at the entrance to supermarkets. Here, purchases are very often confectionery. In fact, Tesco makes no mention of the promotion at its kiosks, although it displays Lindt here along with other confectionery. You need to be shopping in the meat department before you come across the promotional message. So the shopper who is already likely to buy confectionery buys unaware of his entitlement to another bar at half the price, while the promotion tempts those buying meat to add chocolate to their trolley. I was caught out with a soap powder promotion. Following the "buy one, get one half price" sign, I chose the powder next to the sign, checking the size of pack I needed to buy - 3kg - with the promotion message. In fact, the promotion was on an-

other brand of powder, so I paid full price for my 6 kg of soap powder.

● The duds. 200 extra points on your loyalty card when you buy two packs of Typhoo 160 tea bags at £2.99 per pack is a far speedier way to earn rebates than adding points at the usual rate of five for every £5 spent. This offer featured in Sainsbury's Reward Card promotion last month but it appeared less attractive when I compared the price I paid for tea. Instead of £5.98, I could have paid £2.68 for two packs of Waitrose 160 tea bags. Yes, paying £3.30 more for two packs of Typhoo gained an extra 200 points, or £2 voucher, but as it was foil-wrapped, round tea bags with tea of specified origin that I wanted, Waitrose fitted the bill just as well as Typhoo.

This bunch of promotions added more than £6 to my bill, against which I can set savings. I have just about managed to break even. My natural appetite for promotions is out quite as strong as it once was.

## Under the Counter

Dirty weekends? I'd rather stay at home

I was made to go to the country last weekend. Getting away from it all sounds heavenly, but in reality I don't want to get away from it all. I like it all.

In order to make this rustic sojourn as brief as possible, I spent Friday night in town and dosed up on the synthetic pleasures of metropolitan life, trying to block out the manure and cider that was waiting at the end of the motorway. Saturday morning involved lugging heaps of unflattering outerwear to the car, as our hosts were bound to make us go for cold, damp walks round their muddy land, to admire their yawningly efficient fences and incredibly dull ditches.

On arrival, down on the farm, initial depression set in as I had to gird my loins and protect my soft Italian handbag from the eight dogs and the charging geese. Our hostess (seven months pregnant with twins) was wearing a never-washed hairy sweater and stirring a pot of something brown and steaming on the Aga. After we had patted her tummy and congratulated him on his amazingly powerful testicles, there came an immense lift to my country blues - they poured us huge G&Ts and switched on *Blind Date*.

Then it was time for dinner. As I lifted a forkful of duck, a hearty shout came from the kitchen: "Watch out for the shot!" Thank God I didn't crunch on one of these mini ballbearings, as I've just spent more money on a filling than I did on a new tumble dryer. My husband, however, hit the jackpot, and was spitting out shot all evening. I had been hoping that kneading had not come into our hostess's culinary preparations, but dessert was homemade apple pie. I won't have to take any Yakult for a while, as she could have grown mustard and cress in

those palms. Of the country pursuits I might have dreaded, Sunday morning's activity hadn't even crossed my mind - a 7.30am start to take fifty cute little lambs to the slaughter. We hadn't even had breakfast! On arrival at the abattoir, we were greeted by a grim-faced ewe with rigor mortis, who had come down from Scotland, but obviously didn't travel well. I tried not to think of the talking sheep in *Babe*, and hoped it would be beef for lunch.

Our host's idea of a pre-prandial was to make us muck out the cattle, then give them bales of stinking silage (which the poor cows actually eat). At least I was semi-prepared for this, and had doused my polo-neck with Giorgio, so was able to smother myself every time a bale arrived.

It was beef. In fact it was "Flossie" for lunch. But we were only eating her because she had no reproductive organs, so there was no point in keeping her. Yum, yum - pass the horseradish.

Never again will I be tricked with promises of bucolic bliss. It's all about dung and death in the country. I can create my own rural idyll at home - safely within the boundaries of the M25. Emulating Emmerdale: Cultivate stomach flora hygienically with Yakult (each 65ml bottle contains 6.5 billion active *Lactobacillus casei* Shirota). A pack of seven costs £2.50 from most supermarkets; wallow in manure-free mud with AHava black, mineral-rich Dead Sea mud, £14.95 per kilo from Selfridges, Oxford Street, London; adopt a pig, £20, or a goat, £90, from London Zoo, and visit it when feeling Marie Antoinetteish, telephone 0171-722 3333 for details.

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# The abiding virtues of an SL

James Ruppert on the wisdom of investing in a second-hand Mercedes sports car

A new Mercedes SLK, latest sports car darling of Europe's style set, will cost you about £30,000, but you'll have to wait two years to get hold of one. There has rarely been a sports car with such a long waiting-list. A second-hand Mercedes SL, big brother to the SLK, and in some people's view even more gorgeous, can cost from as little as £5,000. And if you fancy one, you can have it today.

It has always been the case that whatever Mercedes you buy, from the cheapest saloon to the most expensive limousine, the impression is that the company started with a solid block of steel and chiselled away at it to make a Merc. The so-called "sports" SL models are no exception when it comes to solidity and build quality. People like that in a car: it makes them feel safe, that they are getting engineering value for money, and that it will never let them down. In used-car terms the SL is nothing less than a blue-chip investment. From the £30,000 stratosphere down to the £5,000 slum, there is an SL for just about everyone.

Although the sedate and comfy Mercedes SLs have always been successful on the US west coast and in the *nouveaux riches* English home counties, the models have a proud sporting lineage. This goes back to the track, when the legendary 300SL was created to compete in the 1952 racing season. Adding gull-wing doors to a production 300SL contributed to the myth, although the roots of this model, and a much less potent 190SL open-topped roadster, were a saloon car. These models were replaced by the cleanly styled and quintessentially Sixties SLs which were becoming less sporting and more sybaritic. These cars featured a removable "pagoda-style" steel hardtop, which transformed the convertible into a snug winter coupe.

Just in case you wondered, SL stands for *scher leicht*, but the 1972 model was far from "very light" – it had clearly been on a high-calorie binge. Nevertheless, this model, which survived until 1989, has been the most successful and recognisable SL of all. Its successor SL took the hi-tech route and returned to original SL principles – and proved that Mercedes should still be taken seriously as producers of high-performance sports cars.

While the early SLs are collectors' items and the Sixties versions are contemporary classics, it is the last two versions which are the most "afford-

able" and practical buys. To find out what the appeal of these cars is, I went to see Richard Leach, proprietor of Richards, a Surrey-based Mercedes specialist. "Quite simply these are unique sports cars. Nothing else is built like them: properly serviced and maintained, an SL is a sports car for life. The quality of the mechanicals, upholstery, bodywork and switchgear is second to none. The SLs' unique selling point, though, is the removable hardtop. Pop that on in winter and it turns a convertible into a proper coupé. You cannot possibly tell that the car is meant to be convert-

ible; the transformation is incredible."

Remarkably, Richard Leach has witnessed a huge resurgence of interest in the older model from the Seventies. "When the new SL came out, prices of the old car dropped significantly, but recently the values have been climbing. Basically there is nothing like it on the market, and technically it is much simpler to look after."

A glance at the range produced

between 1971 and 1989 is very confusing. There were six-cylinder models, the 280 and 300SL, which some drivers find too sedate. Then there were the V8s – the larger the number, the bigger the engine. All are thirsty for fuel, but many believe that the 500 and 560SL were the finest luxury sports cars ever built.

When you are buying, a service history is essential – even a Mercedes can deteriorate. SLs don't normally rust, but on a very old example, corrosion can nibble at the wheel arches, the sills and around the head-

lamps. Underneath, the chassis can also rot. Mechanically, the engines should last a lifetime, but if little used or neglected they will corrode internally. Be warned: if the engine sounds noisy, or is sluggish and leaks oil, there will be big repair bills. Prices for these models in first-class condition are going to be £12,000 to £14,000. And a good car, especially a late Eighties example, can go for more than £20,000.

Richards had a 1984 280SL in red with beige cloth, alloy wheels, a rear seat and ABS brakes for £14,995. Twelve years old maybe, but it looked brand new. Over at Sunningdale Motors in Berkshire, a top-of-the-range late-model 1988 500SL tipped the scales at £21,950. Clearly, these old cars won't go out of fashion.

If you want a really cheap SL, then the fixed-roof coupés, hatched SLCs, which are longer, heavier and much less desirable, offer a cheap entry into the marque. However, the £4,995 SL I spotted on a south London car lot looked decidedly tatty up close. In such a situation it is best to walk away.

At the other end of the scale are the new model SLs. Sophisticated, hi-tech, very safe, very fast and remarkably accomplished cars. Ask Diana, Princess of Wales. This car is the aristocrat of sports cars and virtually faultless in use.

An SL that is not perfect, or has an imperfect history, is almost unsaleable. Always buy from a dealer or specialist, or get a proper engineer's report before taking the plunge into SL ownership. Choose between a range-topping 600SL, or the equally competent but cheaper 300SL. Somewhere in the middle is the multi-valve 300SL-24. These are all automatics, but what a choice. Obviously, the best ones can be found at Mercedes dealers. Derwent in Leeds had a 1993 600SL with just 10,000 miles on the clock, and every conceivable extra, retailing for £68,995. Whereas a car trader operating from a very large house in Buckinghamshire offered me a 1989 500SL which was equally over-equipped, for just £34,999.

Looking at used SLs is instructive – almost without exception they look as good as the day they were delivered. Clearly, the SL is a very special kind of sports car. One day maybe all convertibles will be this good.

Richards 01483 272020; Sunningdale Motors: 01344 20072; Derwent 0113244 3000.



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PHOTOGRAPH OLLION BRYDEN

## Road test: Honda Prelude By John Simister

# Play-it-safe design for a surprising performer

They are toiling away in the Honda design department. The previous Prelude's allotted span is nearing its end – Japanese cars seldom stay long in production, for fear of inhibiting consumer demand – and the designers of its replacement are troubled.

What on earth can they do this time? Stay with the aggressively sporty theme brought in with the old one, all snarling nose, high-backed tail and *Thunderbirds* instrumentation? Or retreat into play-it-safe Prelude heartland, a boxier, gentler, more apologetic look, the better to please the blue-rinse set? That's how Preludes used to be, like it or not; sporty, but not too sporty. And that, the designers will decide with typical caution, is how it is to be again.

The resulting coupé looks unremarkable apart from its huge headlight lenses covering sculpturally stepped reflectors. The interior, though well made from high-quality materials (fake wood embellishment excepted) is equally uninspired; it could have come from any car maker. So far, then, there is little to light the fires of desire.

Yet under the Prelude's tidy but self-effacing skin lies some interesting mechanical hardware. In the 2.2-litre

engine of the top models, there's a VTEC variable camshaft system which helps unleash a healthy 185bhp, and lets the engine roam free right up to 7,800rpm. The suspension is precise in its movements, sophisticated in its design, and incorporates rear-wheel steering which, among other things, helps you to manoeuvre in a tight spot, once you have learnt the wheels' unfamiliar trajectories.

This much the previous Prelude also had, but what's new this time around is the option of a four-speed automatic transmission with a "sequential sports shift", a device similar to the Porsche Tiptronic system which allows you to select gears manually by prodding the lever forwards to change up, or tapping it backwards to change down.

If the bulk of your driving is of the town and motorway variety, save up the extra £1,200 and order your Prelude with the sequential shifter. That's because the manual transmission is tiresomely snappy in traffic, the victim of wobbly engine mountings and a fierce clutch. But if you enjoy a good zoom along clear back roads, you must have the manual.

That's because it lets you exploit the engine's energy, which is concentrated



towards the higher end of the speed range and calls for frequent gear changes. In the automatic, the gaps between the gears feel too wide to keep the engine interested, even when you're sequentially selecting them yourself. So you end up frustrated, because there's this fabulous-sounding, crackling-crisp

motor, and you're denied access to its attributes. The gear shifts are jerky, too.

Either way, few cars corner as well as the Prelude with so little skill asked of its driver. That's where the rear-wheel steering's other trick comes into play. It turns the rear wheels, very slightly, in the

same direction as the front ones, making the Prelude so agile through tight twists that it feels almost weightless. That has long been a Prelude party trick, so nothing has changed there. This can be an exciting car, given the right moment. Trouble is, to look at it you would never know.

**Specifications**  
Price: £22,295 on the road. Engine: 2,157cc, four cylinders, 16 valves, 185bhp at 7,000rpm; five-speed manual or four-speed automatic/sequential gearbox, front-wheel drive. Top speed: 142mph, 0-60 in 7.3sec. Fuel consumption: 25-30mpg.

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Nissan 200 SX, £21,000 on the road. Lots of pace from turbo engine, but tricky to handle in the wet. Recently revamped.  
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**First Newsweek tags London the world's coolest city, now Vanity Fair says that "London Swings Again!"**  
If you ask me, London isn't all that different from a few years ago, but if a couple of middle-aged American mags say that it is suddenly great again, then I guess it must be true.

According to *Vanity Fair*, icons of cool Nineties London include Gazza (a Geordie), Manchester (eh?), Björk (who comes from Iceland) and Ruby Wax (who's about as British as the Vauxhall Corsa she promotes). And if you really want to get depressed about the state of modern British icons, there are also mobile phones, ecstasy tablets, *Loaded* magazine and Liam and Patsy. But what about the cars?

The E-type Jag and the Mini were massive Sixties statements, as much a part of the trendy times as Twiggy. Ossie Clark's chiffon dresses and Carnaby Street. The E-type was a mobile sign of sexual liberation – a thrusting, phallic-shaped sportster that was also one of the fastest cars in the world. The Mini was the first British classless car, as likely to be driven by Peter Sellers or Lord Snowdon as by a stevedore from Skagness. As for cool transport in the Nineties, the only mode that gets a

mention is Virgin Atlantic Airways Premium Economy.

Restaurants, fashion, music, magazines: they're all booming in the Great Wen. But as for cars, London apparently swings with all the vitality of a traffic jam on Putney Bridge.

Is this a reflection of our neutered motor industry, now foreign owned and largely a manufacturing site for cars designed and engineered elsewhere? Or are the self-styled arbiters of swinging Nineties coolness giving the poor old car business short shrift?

The Mini is just about worthy of another plug, in the same way that Terence Conran gets one again. They're both Sixties icons still going strong. But while Conran keeps reinventing himself, the Mini really is on its last wheels. The only people who love it now are the Japanese, and that's because

**The ultimate in British cool is a car named after somebody called Trevor**

it's now Brit traditional, not Brit radical. Which means it just isn't chic any more.

No other Rover product is cool, either, though the MGF almost qualifies. It has an androgynous quality – rather like many Britpop stars – and is a fine sports car to drive. But it's more Marks & Spencer than Alexander McQueen.

More smiling is the Ford Ka (OK, it's made in Spain, but was partly developed here). It is cool and has a beguiling pout – rather like Patsy Kensit in a bad mood – but is a bit too Fisher Price from some angles. Close, but not quite.

What about the E-type's successor, the Jaguar XK8? It looks great, and drives great too, but its styling is too derivative. The host of British-made Japanese cars, of course, do nothing to – imply – British trendiness. Quite the opposite.

They define a nation obsessed by practical, everyday, utilitarian virtues: a nation of shopkeepers. There is nothing cool or trendy about Vauxhalls (and very little British about them, either). Pink Rolls-Royces are no longer made for ladies-day Lady Penelope, or John Lennon's Astons and Benleys are too tired and conservative.

No, there's only one make of car that's in tune with the modern British zeitgeist, even if the editors of *Vanity Fair* have probably never heard of it. It's a car that's loud, unreliable and uncouth – just like Liam Gallagher. Yet it has a perversely classical twist, like a Paul Smith suit. It is made in a factory that's dirty and down-at-heel, rather like Camden (the Nineties Chelsea, according to *Vanity Fair*). And it's as flag-wavingly nationalistic as a crowd of Gazza groupies.

Finally, in keeping with its working-class origins, this car is an abbreviation of the name of one of its founders: a bloke called Trevor. So hats off to TVR, that dyspeptic, belching, brutish, eye-catching, fast, laddish sports car, sold mostly in Britain because so few other world car markets would tolerate its foibles. Like Liam and Patsy, *Loaded* and Gazza, TVR makes you proud to be British!

**Gavin Green**



# homes & money

## When the family leaves home

... why don't you? By Penny Jackson

There comes a time in life when climbing up a ladder in gale-force winds to replace roof tiles is just not on. Rebellion sets in after years of patching up the family home – and an increasing number of couples are determined not to spend their retirement mowing acres of lawn and painting crumbling sash windows. It can be as much a relief as a wrench to sell up.

That's not to say that these empty-nesters, liberated from domestic toil, are going to be satisfied with a home of box-like proportions. Nor are they by any means ready to head for purpose-built retirement homes. There are the grandchildren to house from time to time, to say nothing of the furniture.

Developers and agents alike have found that the key requirements for empty-nesters are security and low maintenance, combined with character and reasonable space. Beaufort Homes even makes the point of putting a huge old wardrobe in its show flat at Imperial Apartments in Cheltenham.

The buying power of the newly retired, who more often than not will have a good pension and all the financial advantages of trading down, puts them in a strong market position. At present they are selling the kind of houses that are in short-

est supply, and with the huge expansion in high-quality new homes and the conversion of large, redundant buildings to residential use, empty-nesters are in a section of the market that is spoilt for choice. They can even be adventurously flexible about the area they choose.

Take David and Margaret Ormerod. They have recently moved to rural Norfolk from their home base in Kent via Bournemouth and Cornwall. Their wide-ranging search ended at a disused US Air Force base at Wicken Green, near Fakenham. The once treeless site has been planted with a thousand saplings, and the officers' bungalows renovated and painted. "We fell for the peace and quiet and the space of the homes," says David Ormerod, who is a complete newcomer to Norfolk. "We have three double-sized bedrooms and a huge living room. The ceilings are high and the light is enormous. The garden is a good size, too."

New owners are beginning to stamp their individuality on the previously uniform village of 210 homes, described by the developers, Brunswick Homes, as having a "Continental feel". It was important to Mr Ormerod that it should evolve as a mixed community, not as a preserve for the retired, whose numbers are growing fast. "I'm not at that stage in my life. You

need an assortment of people around you. I've met more people in the months here than I did in Sittingbourne the whole time I was there."

But it is security, such as cameras at the gate, that the Ormerods value above all else. "People tried to break into our house in Kent, and we could never leave the car unlocked, whereas here we have no worries," says David Ormerod. With the money saved on trading down to homes which initially sold for about £30,000, he intends to invest in a place in Tenerife. "We need to be able to leave it [Norfolk] for a few months of the year."

Buyers in their sixties have a very clear idea of what they want. Berkeley Homes houses, which have solid floors and plenty of well-crafted detail, are popular with couples making the transition from old to new.

"They come and talk to us at an early stage of construction because they know exactly what has to go where," says Paul Vallone, sales and marketing director of the company. "We will put in an Aga, say, if that's what they are used to."

No one who is used to a comfortable, stylish home will compromise simply because they need something smaller. Indeed, the old-fashioned country cottage tends to lose its appeal if an attractive but more manageable alternative is on offer.



Empty nesters: David and Margaret Ormerod who made a fresh start in Norfolk

PHOTOGRAPH: KEITH DOWNEY

Liz White and her husband William left an old cottage in the Reading area for a new version with a garage, in a small development in Great Bedwyn. They wanted real countryside away from busy roads, a factor in many older people's decision to move. Beaufort's mixture of homes next to the church extends rather than intrudes on the village. "We have pubs, bakers, a stonemason and a basket maker, just the sort of friendly village we were looking for," says Mrs White. The rail link means they do not have to rely on a car. "We are also within zimmer-frame distance from the doctors," she adds.

Another rich source of smallish country homes is the barn conversion, which is emerging from its rather tattered Eighties image of slapdash and cheap workmanship. Philip Blanchard, of John D Wood, knows why barns appeal to the older buyer. "The size of the rooms means that people don't have to get rid of their furniture."

Hugh Kitchen from Hampshire, who specialises in barn conversions, says you get the feel of a period building, but with a modern interior. Barns are also spacious and secure. "We keep as much that is original as we can. At Chawton we put

sitting rooms on the first floor to get the most from the vaulted ceilings." In Hampshire, good conversions start at more than £200,000.

Devon and Cornwall, though, still have enormous pull with the retired. Madeline Collins, of Marchand Petit in Kingsbridge, has hundreds of enquiries from people wanting to move to the area. "Most have come for holidays for years. Their perfect house, on the Salcombe estuary with a waterfront and sea views, is not only rare, but will cost upwards of half a million." You can buy a lot of old American air base homes for that kind of money.

## House policy: taking sides on gazumping and the law

When staff at Hampstead office turned up for work recently, they found the word "gazumping" scrawled in white paint across the windows. Clearly, one of the many victims of gazumping wished to make a point. He, or she, would doubtless welcome the Labour Party's intention to outlaw the practice. Gazumping – when a vendor, having already accepted an offer, takes a higher one from another buyer – is a feature of a high-demand, low-volume market such as the present one. The last time it was prevalent was in the Eighties boom, but calls for the problem to be addressed died away during the recessionary Nineties.

Estate agents, who deplore the practice without being able to do anything to prevent it, quite naturally take the brunt of a victim's anger. Marc Goldberg of Hampsons says that if a vendor reneges on a deal, it is the agent who breaks the bad news to the buyer and is often regarded as guilty by association. "We are very unpopular at the moment and I would support

any steps to bring an end to gazumping. But if it is to work, I believe there should be a financial penalty, such as a non-refundable deposit. When gazumping happens, the extra amount agents receive in commission is negligible compared to the damage done to our standing."

Hugh Dunsmore-Hardy, chief executive of the National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA), wants to see backing for a pre-contract deposit agreement which would be legally binding. Under the agreement, a buyer and seller would each put up 0.5 per cent of the value of the agreed price and commit themselves to an exchange of contract within a certain number of weeks. The jilted party would be paid the deposit, which should at least cover the costs of solicitors' fees and the survey. "I would support the Labour Party's proposals as long as they do not hamper the workings of the market. The compensation should be sufficient for both parties to be mindful of the penalty for breaking the agreement, but not so much that it ties up sales."

A pre-contract agreement has some of the features of the Scottish system, which many people look to as a shining example of how it could be done. But the NAEA believes the differences in the two systems would make it unworkable in the rest of the UK. John Brown of DTZ Debenham Thorpe in Edinburgh explains that even under the Scottish system gazumping occurs. Buyers have to be satisfied on a number of issues, including the survey, before they sign a contract. Unless the seller has all the documentation ready it can be a slow process. There is nothing to stop gazumping in this period, he said. "Also if legislation is to be even-handed it should apply to gazumping (when buyers re-offer at a lower price in a falling market) as well as gazumping."

The penalty for not completing on time is severe. "If you exchange missives, agreeing to all the terms, one of those conditions is likely to be a payment of 3 or 4 per cent above bank rate for every day you haven't paid for the house," says Mr

Brown. "What I would really like the Labour Party to look at is the 1979 Estate Agents Act. The last part requiring anyone advising on property to be professionally qualified has not been implemented. That would make a difference."

Penny Jackson



Frank points out, you could have your offer on a house accepted and then find your mortgage surveyor says it's not worth the money. If you couldn't afford to make up the difference yourself, you would be forced to pull out. You would then have to pay the other side's costs. Would this be fair?

"There has to be an escape clause for instances like this. It is terribly unfair if the vendors change their minds about selling, leaving you £3,000 out of pocket for survey and legal fees, but suppose you pulled out on the advice of your lawyer because of a problem with the title deeds? Should you be penalised? "Gazumping is an appalling way to behave, but this plan won't make the slightest difference to the sellers. They may have to compensate the buyer, but the extra they receive from the higher offer would cover that. It may soften the blow for the buyer, but he still loses the home he wanted to buy."

Buyers should still have the right to withdraw, say agents, because their reasons may be compelling. A death in the family, divorce, losing one's job, being relocated, or a sudden change of financial situation – any of these could result in the collapse of an agreement. "I don't believe you can legislate against gazumping," says Harrington.

Robin Featherick of Strutt & Parker agrees. "I can't see how it is possible to eradicate it, or legislate against it effectively, although we thoroughly disapprove of it. What would happen if this plan goes

ahead is that an offer would be made subject to everything under the sun. There are just too many loopholes that would be used by buyers and sellers."

The much-vaunted Scottish system has also been debated. Where once there was a clean offer, now, says Knight Frank's Colin Strang Steel in Edinburgh, it comes with 40 conditions attached.

"The to-ing and fro-ing can go on for months. During that time either party can withdraw, though it is usually the purchaser who does so."

The Labour plan may have limited use as a deterrent to buyers withdrawing, especially fantasists who have no intention of carrying through their offer, says Harrington.

The only solution is to get the contracts signed as quickly as possible, giving no chance for gazumping," he says. "My view is that the lock-out agreement is the best weapon. It provides for a period of time in which the vendor must take the property off the market and is not able to offer it to others. This gives protection over the time limit concerned. Of course there is nothing to stop a vendor delaying exchange of contracts until the end of the term and then accepting a higher offer."

The Labour plan, says Harrington, is a fine principle, but it's shot through with holes. "It sounds wonderful stuff. I hope it's not just intended to attract votes."

Rosalind Russell

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## Three of the best apartments

**Bar Lodge**, a late-Victorian house divided into three apartments, is perched above the Bar at the entrance to Salcombe Harbour in Devon. The property has spectacular views of the open sea and across National Trust coastline. The upper apartment has four bedrooms, with two balconies and a sun terrace. Residents have access to a private beach. £275,000 through Marchand Petit (01548 857588).

**The Old Bakery** in Brixton Hill, London SW2 is an unusual warehouse apartment converted by the owner, a property developer. Instead of carving up the 3,252 square feet into flats, he's created an enormous two-bedroom apartment. The 42ft by 36ft sitting room has a vaulted ceiling and exposed beams and brickwork, and leads to a custom-built kitchen. The main bedroom is equally roomy, at more than 36ft by 19ft, and the guest bedroom is a generous 15ft by 17ft. £375,000 through Friend & Falcke (0171-498 0736).

**Flat 5 in Little Walden Hall**, near Saffron Walden in Essex, is on the first floor of a Victorian country house. The one-bedroom flat has a fitted chandelier in the drawing room, elaborately carved doors leading to a study, and an 18th kitchen. Garages are in the courtyard and there is a communal summerhouse. No ground rent is payable, but the annual maintenance charge is currently around £1,200. Price £120,000 through Bruce Munro (01799 523628).



Superb setting: Bar Lodge in Devon



Space and light: The Old Bakery, Brixton



Fine fittings: Little Walden Hall, Essex

## Read the fine print, then read it again

Stella Bingham negotiates the minefield that is buying a leasehold flat

Many buyers contend that it would be easier to purchase a country mansion set in rolling parkland with a home farm, fishing rights and staff cottages than to buy a leasehold flat. No one should tackle the pitfalls of leasehold property combined with the perils of shared living under the same roof without doing their homework.

The biggest stumbling-block is, invariably, the lease. Always go through this minutely before committing yourself. The lease, of course, sets out everything you can and cannot do in your own home – from subletting, to how often you have to clean your windows. Check that your share of the service charge bill is fair. Look at the ground rent provisions. They may go sky high if they are subject to regular review.

Leases are weird and wonderful things and they depend on where you are, says Howard Elston, of Strutt & Parker. "Get a local specialist conveyancing solicitor to go through a copy of the lease. He knows the quirks and can be more relaxed about them. For instance, the leases for several estates in South Kensington say that residents aren't allowed to keep pets but, in fact, the landlords turn a blind eye."

If you need a mortgage, lenders will generally ask for the lease to run for at least 30 years after the loan has been repaid. But lease length is not as crucial as it used to be. The 1993 Leasehold Act gave most tenants the right to buy lease extensions of up to 90 years. If the years left do not look good, try to get the seller to take up his option to extend before you buy.

When Mark Davies, a banker, offered £129,000 through Foxtons for the 51-year lease on his large studio flat in South Kensington, it was in the mistaken belief that the vendor had already negotiated a 54-year extension. "When we discovered what had happened, the price fell by £15,000, the sum the lease extension will cost me."

In many buildings, leaseholders have formed their own company to buy the freehold. "This means you have more control over your own destiny and the building should be cheaper to run," says Joshua Grinling, of Winkworth.

But paying too little can be dangerous. "Sellers often say to me that they are paying only £200 a year in service charges," says Peter Rollings, of Foxtons. "That would frighten the life out of me. On flats priced between £150,000 and £250,000 I'd prefer to see

charges of about £1,000 a year. That allows for a sinking fund and shows that someone is thinking about the future. Charges that seem high but include heating and hot water could be good value."

Obviously, a well-maintained block keeps its value better than a neglected one. "Well-kept common parts can add 5 to 10 per cent to a flat's value," Peter Rollings continues. It is also less likely you will face unexpectedly large bills.

Joshua Grinling, meanwhile, advises buyers to "look at the common parts: has the exterior been repointed or repainted recently? Look at the level of porterage. Some blocks are overmanned."

When it comes to choosing between a purpose-built flat or a conversion, it's purely a matter of personal taste, says Joshua Grinling. "Younger people are more comfortable with a conversion because they know how much a new roof, for example, will cost. And if the freehold is shared between five units, and you have regular meetings, expenditure is more controllable." Conversions often have original features and more character, but rooms may have been awkwardly divided to create bathrooms and kitchens.

"With purpose-built blocks you have solid floors and good sound insulation, and the ceilings won't reduce as you go higher up," says Peter Rollings.

Older blocks need more upkeep, says Tony Halstead, a property consultant. "You may have to pay for a new roof, scaffolding, lift insurance or a new lift." And individual flat owners will have less say in how a large block is run.

Think about light, noise and security as well as resale potential when deciding which floor to live on. A top-floor flat may have wonderful views, but without a lift it could be hard to sell.

"The amount of light is very important to me," says Mark Davies, who, nonetheless, chose a basement flat. "My flat has french doors opening out to a patio; it doesn't look out on to the street, so you are not always looking at people's ankles, and, most important, the living-room roof is all frosted glass."

In theory, a flat offers the double security of the main front door and the flat's front door, but basement and ground-floor flats are vulnerable. Check how security-conscious the neighbours are.

Yet, as Joshua Grinling says, "If you really want to be in charge of your destiny, buy a freehold house."

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Anyone who has spent any time listening to stockbrokers in their pomp will know all about the old adage that bull markets "climb a wall of worry".

What it means is that there are always reasons to be anxious about the current level of share prices if you want to find them – and the higher the market goes during a bull market, the more serious those worries seem to become.

The successful trader, so your friendly broker will tell you, must be bold and blithe enough to ignore the warning voices that will inevitably accompany any projected surge in the stock market – else he will miss the best part of the fun.

Like most things that old hands say about the stock market, this always seems better advice in hindsight – when you know what subsequently happened – than it does at the time.

Of course, it seems obvious now that the Mexican debt crisis in August 1982 marked the start of the current 15-year bull market in shares; it just didn't seem that way at the time.



Jonathan Davis

The worriers are at it again. Maybe we should take them seriously

Likewise, any old fool can see that the 1987 crash was just a blip in the long upward march of Wall Street.

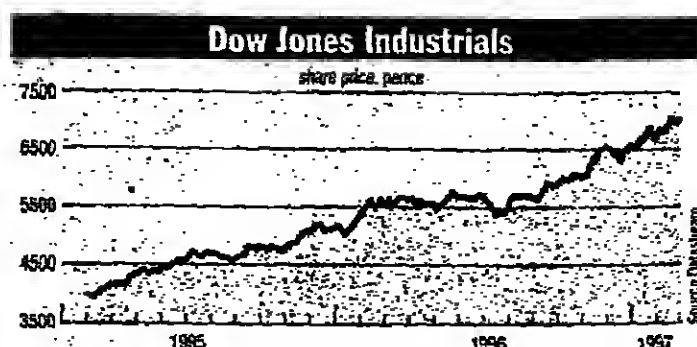
We know now that it was merely an ordinary correction to a clearly overvalued market which unexpectedly spiralled out of control thanks to a previously untested invention called portfolio insurance.

This was the technique, you will recall, invented by some American computer buffins which allowed computers to run portfolios for institutions and ordered them to sell whenever shares fell more than a certain percentage.

It took the 1987 crash to discover it had a serious bug – once the market's fall had reached a certain point, the system merely became a recipe for *auto de fe*, with each wave of selling automatically creating more orders to sell.

At the time, however, most people worried that the crash was a portent of some far more serious economic setback – and for some countries, including Britain, where inflation was starting to take off after the Lawson boom, those concerns were not entirely misplaced.

Now it does not take a genius to



notice that the worriers are at it all over again. The difference this time is that the wall of worry the market is climbing is not economic – the US economy, as Mr Greenspan conceded, has rarely looked healthier – but simply the value of the market itself.

It is hard, as I said a few weeks ago, not to take seriously the many well-regarded voices which now believe that Wall Street has become a very risky place at current valuation levels.

On almost any historical valuation criterion, we have entered unprecedented territory. And since the voices now include Alan

Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, the man whose decisions can do most to stop the markets in its tracks, it is no longer simply enough merely to scoff at the worriers' concerns.

This week Mr Greenspan, giving his half-yearly account of the state of the economy to Congress, repeated his concerns about the current bull market.

He repeated his warning that the stock market was showing signs of "irrational exuberance" and suggested that higher interest rates could be needed soon to stop a resurgence of inflation. There can be no doubt that the world's

most powerful central banker was going out of his way to try to dampen Wall Street's continued buoyancy.

As the market took little notice of Mr Greenspan's hint last time, why should it pay any attention now? Well, one reason is that it usually takes actions, not words, to stop a genuinely rampant bull market.

As long as Mr Greenspan goes on talking about the need for interest rate rises, but refrains from actually making them, some investors may be tempted to go on calling his bluff.

That in a way is precisely how the irrationality which the Fed chairman was warning about manifests itself.

But Mr Greenspan's problem is that he knows – and admitted again this week – that the US economy is in remarkably good shape.

What concerns him most, I suspect, is not the fact that the market has been strong, but the way that those who have been busy pushing the bull market case have now started to justify their case.

As conventional valuation criteria no longer support current

share prices, the recourse of the bulls now is to the "once in a lifetime" rationale that spells particular danger.

There was a telling example the other day at the Davos economic forum, where a group of prominent academics and businessmen sat down to debate – in all earnestness – the proposition that the "business cycle" has been abolished.

The argument here is that computers and new business practices, such as "just in time" delivery of goods, are eliminating the need for companies to hold large amounts of stocks.

It is the ups and downs of the stock cycle which some believe is the principal cause of the business cycle itself.

Do you believe that? If you do, then this is your kind of stock market. I know that I don't – and it is clear that Mr Greenspan does not either.

History, he said, is full of "new eras" that turned out to be mirages. The four most dangerous words in investment, as another old market adage goes, are "this time it is different". It never is.

## Where do I find good advice?

Rachel Fixsen has a few suggestions

There are around 28,000 financial products on the market. Which one do you want? More importantly, which one do you really need?

We can always do our own research to get at the facts, of course. It may require a long sabbatical – and a lot of background reading. Interested? Let's face it, most of us have better things to do.

For comprehensive planning, financial advisers can help negotiate the minefield. They have the resources and expertise to know which products are around and, for those that are independent, have a legal requirement to recommend the most suitable product for you.

The problem is that all too often choosing the right adviser can seem even more daunting than picking one's way through the financial maze itself.

There is a range of choices: ☐ A tied agent who could be a representative of a bank or insurer, can only sell you products from one company.

☐ An independent adviser (IFA) can offer you a product from any company. They must have professional qualifications and are regulated by the Personal Investment Authority (PIA).

☐ Financial planners are good



If you need a complete review of your financial circumstances, you may also be authorised to give financial advice.

☐ Solicitors and accountants may also be authorised to give financial advice.

How do you find a reputable adviser who is not going to sell you ostriches? Garry Heath, chairman of the IFA Association, a trade body for financial advisers, recommends talking to your friends. "There are 9 million clients of IFAs out there," he says.

If you cannot get a personal recommendation the following phone services will help you track one down:

☐ IFA Promotion, on 0117 971 1177 gives you addresses of three IFAs in your area.

☐ Money Management magazine has a list of fee-based advisers. (Call 0117 976 9444 for list of six nearest to you.) ☐ If your financial affairs are complex or you have a high net worth, the Institute of Financial Planning has a register of members available by calling 0117 930 4434.

☐ The Solicitors for Independent Financial Advice helpline on 01372 721172.

It pays to make some checks before parting with money. A financial adviser must be

authorised by his or her relevant watchdog. For IFAs this is the PIA; for solicitors it is the Law Society and for accountants it is the Institute of Chartered Accountants. You must call these organisations or the Securities and Investments Board, the overall regulator, on 0171 929 3652 to make sure your adviser is bona fide.

How qualified is the adviser? By the end of June, all advisers must have a benchmark qualification. This is usually the Financial Planning Certificate (FPC), set at three levels. The exams are set and marked by the Chartered Insurance Institute (CII). A range of alternative qualifications are allowed. If in doubt, contact the PIA on 0171 538 8860.

Qualifications are a useful way of telling what the overall knowledge is of the adviser concerned. But they do not convey the IFA's ability to put that knowledge to use in a creative way on your behalf.

Many lone IFAs and firms have the backing of a large IFA network, which helps them with research into products and helps with compliance issues. However, simply belonging to one of these networks is no guarantee.

Amanda Davidson, a partner at Holden Meehan, a London firm of IFAs, suggests asking plenty of questions at the first meeting. How long has the adviser been in business? Is it qualified? Does it have areas of specialism? If the adviser is a sole trader, is there any back-up? Ask them to give you two clients as referees.

Be prepared to walk away: "You may just not feel comfortable with them, and want to move on," she adds.

One potentially embarrassing question concerns the adviser's remuneration. Given that the whole purpose of going to an IFA is to talk about money, this is not a sensible approach. Essentially, advisers are paid either on a straightforward fee system or they earn commission.

Financial advisers must tell you the commission they would earn from that sale. This is so clients do not feel the advice is biased either way.

IFAs working on a fee-only basis might charge £100-£150 an hour in central London and £50-£100 in the provinces. One can usually agree a complete fee in advance. They will then rebate any commission back to you.

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# It's different for women

Take two adults – one male, one female. They are the same age, have the same jobs and identical lifestyles. Their financial planning needs are the same, aren't they?

In fact, the opposite is true. Women find themselves paying more, or less, than men across a wide range of finance products.

In effect, the same potential outcomes – financial security when ill, a decent retirement income, even car insurance – require different inputs from women.

These differentials are set to continue, despite changes in the law, such as this week's planned government reforms entitling divorced people, usually women, to a share in their partners' pensions when a marriage ends.

Take permanent health insurance, an income payable when a person is unable to return to work after a lengthy illness. Holden Meehan, a firm of independent financial advisers in London, says cover worth £20,000 a year for a woman aged 30, in a low-risk occupation, would cost £33.76 a month. By contrast, a male of the same age would pay only £18.60 a month. At age 35, women pay £42.18, compared to just £22.98 for men.

Amanda Davidson, a partner at Holden Meehan, explains women's higher claims experience: "It is tough being a woman. I suspect the pressures of modern living, where a woman has so many roles to play, mean more stress on body and soul, and hence more claims. Women are also more complicated physically than men, so there is more to go wrong."

The differential is reversed in the case of critical illness cover, a different type of

## Nic Cicutti discovers why financial security usually costs them more

insurance where a lump sum is paid out when sudden illnesses strike, such as heart attacks and strokes or cancer being diagnosed. John Joseph, a London financial adviser specialising in this field, says cover of £100,000 for a woman aged 45 might cost £42.60 a month. However a man might expect to pay £35.70.

This variation increases with age: women aged 55 pay £95.50 a month compared with £128.40 for men. By contrast, at age 30, the differential favours men, if anything: £14.20 compared to £15.70 for women.

Mr Joseph says: "Typically, with this type of contract women have had higher rates of cancer than men but they did not appear to suffer from coronary or respiratory diseases, which meant they paid less."

"But this is changing as underwriters obtain more up-to-date claims experience and it is likely that women will have to pay more."

Private medical insurance is an exception – for now. Bupa, the largest provider, does not differentiate between men and women but on the basis of age. A person of either sex aged 30 would expect to pay £23.68 a month for Bupa's more basic type of cover. But John Castagna, Bupa head of product development, warns the company is reviewing this policy following competition from providers which charge gender-based premiums.

With life insurance, the straightforward type of cover which pays out in the event of death, the picture is the same. Prudential, the giant UK insurer, would charge a 30-year-old woman £19 a month for cover worth £100,000. A man would pay £21. Ten years later, however, the man would pay £42, with the woman charged just £28 a month.

Norman Turner, head of financial planning at Prudential, says: "Although mortality rates have improved for men and women, the differential in terms of how much longer women live has tended to remain the same."

Women's longevity relative to men also has a big effect on their retirement income. But here, social factors also play an important role. The fact that women live longer means that when they retire, their pension is less than a male's at the same age. Figures from the Annuity Bureau, the retirement income specialist in London, show that a male smoker aged 60 would expect to receive an income worth £7,936 for a £75,000 lump sum. A female smoker would receive only £7,060.

Peter Quinton, who runs the Annuity Bureau, says: "In general, companies will pay a similar amount to men and women. Because women live longer, they receive less but over a longer period."

This longevity means that for women to receive the same pension as men, they must pay in more. According to Black

Horse Financial Services, part of Lloyds Bank, a woman aged 35 would expect to pay about £180 a month to receive a pension worth £10,000 at 65. By contrast, a man would pay £160.

Clearly advance planning is critical in this area. Yet research by Fleming, the fund manager, shows 53 per cent of women will face a sharp drop in income when they retire, against 40 per cent of men. An important contributor to poor pensions is not just lower pay, but career breaks. A woman who takes five years off might receive a pension worth at least 15 per cent less than someone who remains in work.

Women also have to pay out more when it comes to meeting the cost of long-term care (LTC). Sandy Johnstone, who heads a unit specialising in LTC products for Commercial Union, says a woman aged 65 would expect to pay £67.60 a month to insure for cover worth £10,000 a year. A man pays £52.80.

Roddy Kohn, a financial adviser at Kohn Cougar, a Bristol firm, says: "The bottom line is that women must begin planning earlier and in more detail than men. The good news is that if they do, they can offset many of the financial handicaps they are likely to face."

Relief may come in the form of lower car insurance premiums. Premium Search, a telephone insurer, says a 30-year-old London teacher driving a Vauxhall Cavalier would only pay £293 in premiums, compared to £302 for her male opposite number. The company says men tend to have fewer accidents than women but the cost of their claims tends to be higher.

## The sex gap: how men and women compare

Women	Men
£293	£302
£33.76pm	£18.60pm
£42.60pm	£55.70pm
same	same
£28pm	£42pm
£7,060pa	£7,936pa
£160pm	£160pm
£67.60pm	£52.80pm

Age 30 unless otherwise stated. See text for sources and policy and provider details.



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Gartmore is extending the no-charge offer on its Global PEP until 31 May. The fund also operates no exit, switching or withdrawal charges on its portfolio. Call 0800 289336.

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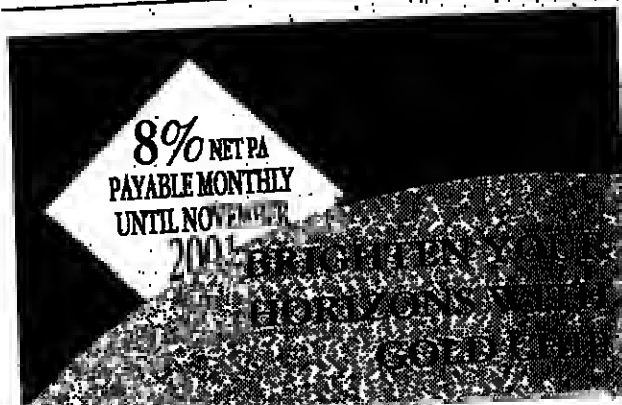
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# Income and growth without losing your shirt

Distribution bonds offer a decent return – as well as peace of mind. Nic Cicutti reports

The search by investors for the elusive combination of respectable income plus good capital growth – and all without risking one's shirt – has led to the launch of a variety of savings products.

Today, the most popular investment, without doubt, is a personal equity plan. PEPs allow savers the opportunity for growth and income, all in a tax-free wrapper.

But there is one – currently unused – savings product that has attracted more than £3bn of savers' money. It has generally succeeded in growing ahead of inflation while offering a reasonable income. And apart from a cold suffered in 1994, it has proved a generally safe haven for funds.

Distribution bonds have proved a popular option for almost 200,000 savers in the past 15 years.

Essentially, they are a form of unit-linked savings scheme, with a generally conservative investment strategy. Funds are spread across a range of equities, gilts and other

fixed-interest investments. Income from bonds, usually paid on two distribution dates each year, is free of capital gains and income tax at the basic rate.

Among the most popular distribution bonds are those from Sun Life, Prudential, Allied Dunbar, Standard, Scottish Provident and Axa Equity & Law.

While generally considered a safer investment, different distribution funds will have varying investment strategies and risks attached to them. In turn, the annual income paid can vary between 4 and 7 per cent a year, depending on the bond. Sales of the bonds have waxed and waned compared with other products on the market.

Andrew Jones, a partner at the Aaron Partnership, a firm of independent financial advisers in Milton Keynes, says: "They were very popular until mid-1994. The problem came in that year when both equity and bond markets fell in the same year. Given that these products were marketed as low-risk funds, it

made a lot of people nervous." Since then, many investors have preferred other products, including with-profit bonds. But they have greater exposure to equities than distribution bonds.

Unlike PEPs, distribution bonds are the subject of a "tax-drag" effect on the life company fund itself. Higher-rate taxpayers can currently withdraw up to 5 per cent of the initial capital value each year, without paying any tax. They pay a further 16 per cent (17 per cent after 5 April) on sums above that 5 per cent.

For many savers, PEPs are a more sensible option, particularly given that some companies, including Sun Life, have set up plans under a tax-free wrapper which replicate faithfully the fund strategy of a distribution bond.

In fact, some financial advisers believe the bonds are not a useful investment tool at all. One, who refuses to be named, argues: "The particular mix of funds is one which can just as easily be set up by any

adviser through the right portfolio of investment trusts or PEPs, which may have lower charges.

"What worries me is that these are nice little commission-earners for advisers and they may put a client into a distribution bond before any other product."

Mr Jones argues that distribution bonds can still be useful. "If you have invested up to your PEP limit, a distribution bond may offer an additional opportunity for relatively risk-free investment."

Many advisers, including the Aaron Partnership, are prepared to enhance bonds through commission rebating or by obtaining better terms from the life company.

The company recommends that bonds are a better haven for spare cash than annuity products in retirement, as a supplement for those who have recently retired.

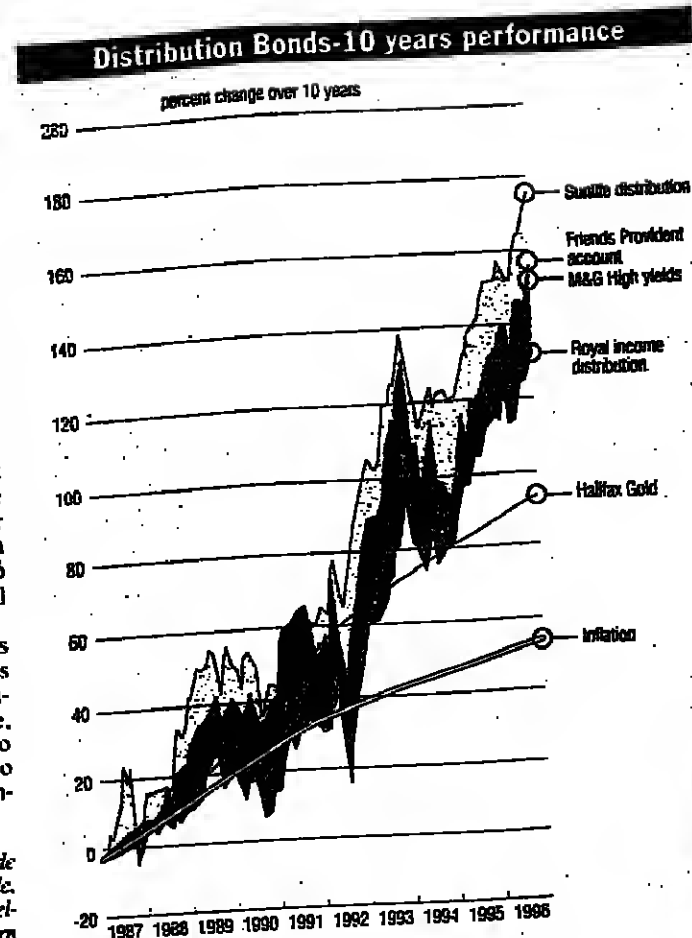
Despite the keen competition among bond providers, the company all the others still want to beat is Sun Life, whose fund was set up in 1979. The fund invests about 40

per cent in UK equities, a further 40 per cent in fixed-interest stocks and the remainder in cash or other convertibles.

It does not invest either in property or overseas equities, claiming this policy makes the fund more secure. Although it has ridden relatively unscathed through most market downturns, including the October 1987 crash or the dip after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, the fund caught a cold in the 1994 downturn along with all others.

The key for distribution bonds, as with most investments, is to discuss the matter fully with an independent adviser first. But for some, these funds may be the answer to the age-old conundrum of how to provide safety, growth and reasonable income.

Copies of the Aaron Partnership guide to distribution bonds are available, price £2 (inc. P&P), by writing to Shelton House, High Street, Woburn Sands, Milton Keynes, MK17 8SD.



Nic Cicutti

## Pensions split will reduce the traumas of divorce

Divorce must be one of the most traumatic experiences that grown men and women can go through. The recognition that a broken relationship can no longer be mended and that permanent separation must take place is not a decision lightly taken.

For many women, there is then the problem of how they will survive financially. Often, the family depended solely or mostly on a husband's income. Now they must learn new skills, re-entering the jobs marketplace for the first time in years.

To cap it all, until now there has always been the problem of adequate pension provision for women after their divorce. In the past, many women discovered too late that divorce meant penury in retirement because their husband had retained all pension rights for himself.

That is why this week's decision on pension-splitting at divorce, announced by the Government, is a good move.

Ministers had long wanted to divide pensions after a divorce. However, the way they intended to do so was silly. In effect, they wanted pension-less divorcees to lay a claim to part of their former partner's pensions, but payable only when they retired.

The problem with this approach was that it left women tied to their ex-husbands' financial cost-tails, possibly for many years.

Worse, it meant that if the husband died before retirement, the woman might receive no pension at all. It took a revolt in the Lords two years ago to force the Government to change its mind, as it finally did this week.

The problem is, however, that the Government has not said when this change will take place. It equivocated for two years, while another 360,000 couples divorced, and it now looks as if it may be at least one more year – and a further 180,000 divorces – before its proposals become law, whichever party wins the general election.

Perhaps one should not expect much more than this, given that we are at the end of the present administration. But there is something intensely annoying that a proposal so sensible has taken all these

years to make it to the statute books. The system has let hundreds of thousands of innocent people down.

Last week we inaugurated our advice column with a review of Paula Martin's finances. Paula had problems with a hideously expensive personal pension sold to her in the late 1980s by someone from a company called Merchant Investors.

On Monday, Merchant Investors were in touch with Paula to apologise for what happened. They have promised to reimburse her into the occupational pension scheme she should have joined all that time ago.

A few years ago, the company reviewed its charges and recognised it had a problem. It discarded most of its expensive admin fees for new pensions it sells, and is now one of the cheapest on the market.

But that still left people like Paula stuck on the old contracts. Significantly, the company has made a commitment to look at all policies from the same time to see if it can resolve problems any other policyholders may have. So, if you have a Merchant Investors pension dating to that period, get in touch with the company.

By the way, Paula's original salesman went off to join another company, now called Lincoln National. While there, he sold Paula another policy that may have been inappropriate. He was undoubtedly prolific and has probably given many other people the benefits of his salesmanship. Let's see if Lincoln National contacts us next week.

This week, the advice column discusses other subjects. Dozens of you have written asking for a review. We can't promise everyone will get one, but we hope to select cases that will give all readers food for thought. Keep writing in if you want to take part.

Indeed, if there is any point you want to make, a gripe about your financial provider, a (friendly) comment about one of this section's stories, send me a letter.

Write to: Nic Cicutti, Financial Advice Office, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5DL.

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# No scramble for dinosaur eggs

**Collect to invest:** They may be old but they're not rare, says John Windsor

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**D**inosaur eggs for Easter: £225-£400 each. A couple of dozen are being offered for sale by Chris Martin, the Loddon antiques and natural history dealer. They come embedded in clear-coloured silk in charmingly oval gift boxes that would look out of place in their native Henan province, North West China – either over 75-85 million years ago.

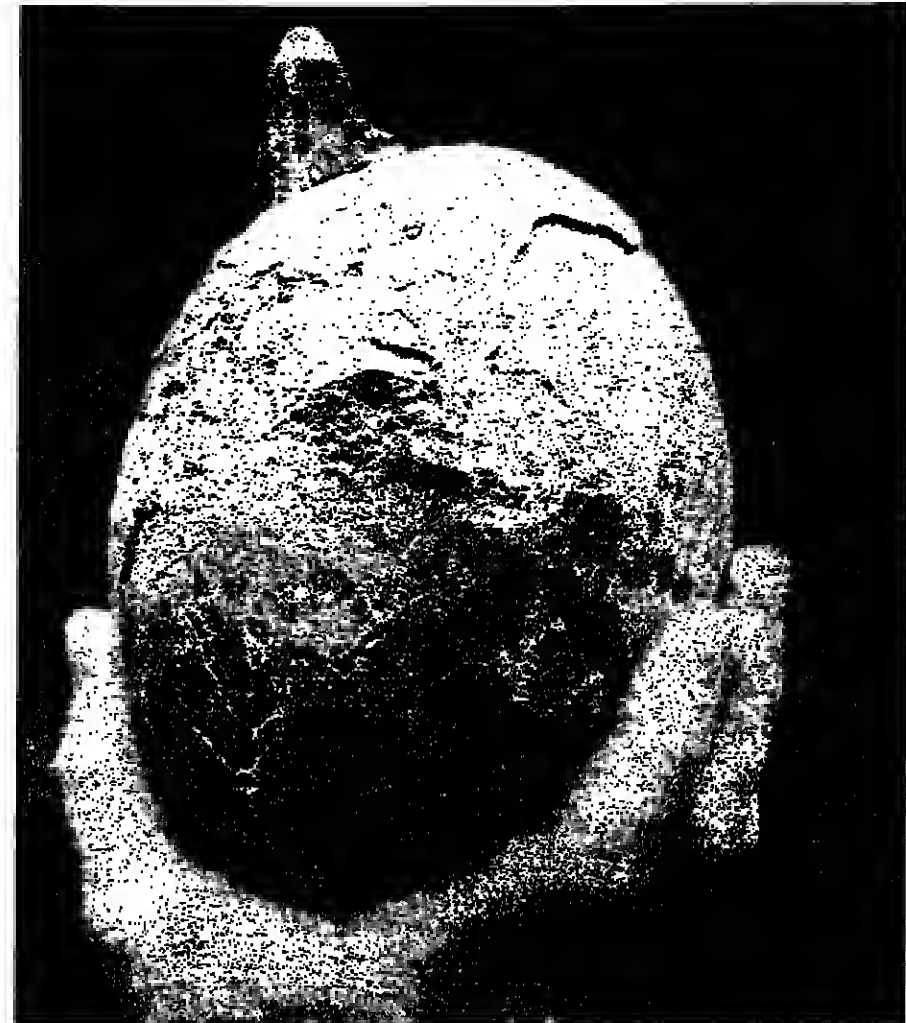
The market for fossilised dinosaur eggs has boomed and busted since they began being smuggled out of China via Hong Kong in their hundreds five years ago. Whether you buy now, at the bottom of the market, depends on whether you think the Chinese will increase their rarity by putting a stop to smuggling. The latest buzz, however, is that there are 10,000 dinosaur eggs waiting to be illegally shipped to the United States and Australia before Hong Kong is handed back to the Chinese on 30 June.

Peak prices coincided with *Jurassic Park* fever: £1,600 was paid at Bonhams in 1994 for the egg of a sauropod (plant-eating) dinosaur by Oliver Hoare, art dealer and confidant of Princess Diana. In the same auction, a nest of 10 sauropod eggs, embedded in heavy clay, fetched £46,200.

Fresh out of Hong Kong, eggs of the therizinosaur, a two-legged theropod (meat-eater) known as the scythe lizard because of its menacing two-foot claws, change hands for \$300, according to Terry Manning, the Leicester fossil dealer and researcher.

He had just returned from last week's big 10-day fair of fossil, mineral and gem dealers in Tucson, Arizona, where Chinese dealers from Hong Kong had whispered the latest on smuggling.

Dinosaur eggs, not found in the UK, are part of native antiquity in the US, so that is where the market is. Mr Manning has seen fine quality



Dinosaur eggs for Easter: For sale at £225-£400 each

PHOTOGRAPH: NICOLA KURTZ

therizinosaur eggs offered by dealers at the fair for \$900 and fine quality sauropod eggs for \$1,000. Run-of-the-mill specimens were changing hands for \$150-\$800 – a higher price than a year or 18 months ago, when, after a rush of consignments from Hong Kong, eggs in average condition were at a rock-bottom \$50-\$100.

He scotched rumours that Chinese had been executed and imprisoned by the authorities for smuggling dinosaur eggs. They had in fact been executed and imprisoned by the army – "the biggest smuggler, a kind of mafia" – for refusing to co-operate with its illegal

egg smuggling. Mr Manning's ambition is to do a Jurassic – to use a computer to reconstruct dinosaur DNA from biological remains found in their unhatched eggs, then clone a living dinosaur by inserting the DNA into a bird embryo. He admits that the computer power needed is the equivalent of the total information on the Internet (where, incidentally, dinosaur eggs are for sale at \$800-\$1,200).

But the recent cloning of an adult animal – a sheep – has taken his project a micron or two out of the realms of science fiction.

In the past four years he has bought 1,600 fossilised

therizinosaur eggs, ranging in price from \$800 each for the first 250 to \$48 each for 50 inferior specimens from Japan. Out of the total, he has found only 15 that contain biological remains – bones and tiny teeth, proving, incidentally, that the embryo dinosaurs had cut a third set of teeth by the time they were ready to break out of the egg.

Each egg with a "commercially viable" embryo, he calculates, has cost him \$72,000. In an attempt to recoup costs, he offered two of them at Phillips New York in December, each with a reserve of \$125,000. They failed to sell. But a well-preserved therizinosaur

egg of his, without embryo, fetched \$3,737 in the same sale. Phillips's David Hirschowitz will sell only top-condition eggs (up to 95 per cent intact). He can get \$4,000 for a good sauropod egg that a dealer could get only \$800 for – proving that, in the US, some private buyers still think dinosaur eggs are rare.

Ironically, it is the expensive eggs with real embryo inside that are the least decorative. They are often found crushed. The "inflated" ones that still look like eggs – such as Mr Martin's Easter eggs – are the ones that have hatched. Minerals that drifted through the hole left by the hatching dinosaur preserve their shape.

Mr Martin's eggs have been identified as therizinosaur by the Natural History Museum. But some measure 8in by 5in, compared with the usual 3in by 2in for therizosaurs, and some experts, such as Mr Manning, reckon they are more likely sauropod. They are 65 per cent intact, the remainder of what was once shell having been replaced by hard red Chinese clay.

Ironically, the fact that there is virtually no market for dinosaur eggs in this country makes them relatively hard to find. Bonhams no longer offers them. In fact, Bonhams auctioneer Philip Keith, still famous for his coup in getting a peak £46,200 for a clutch of 10, is heartily sick of the things. He values average-condition eggs in this country at £100-£300.

He says: "I could name 150 collectors and dealers in the US, the Far East and Europe who want to sell. Not a week goes by without my being offered some. I tell vendors that they are not rare and that nobody wants them, but they don't believe me. At the end of the day, they're just eggs, aren't they. I think they're boring."

Chris Martin, 85 The Vale, Southgate, London N14 6AT

## Click on cameras

**John Windsor's auction round-up**

**T**he year is weak: now is the time to buy Leica cameras, whether for use or as collectables. Up to 40 per cent of the money bid for cameras in London comes from Japan and the yen's decreased buying power has prompted Christie's South Kensington to throttle back estimates by 10 per cent, especially at the top of the market.

Secondhand Leicas are not expensive. A couple of hundred pounds can buy one. At South Ken's camera sale on Thursday (2pm), a Leica IIIc of the early Forties is estimated at £200-£300.

The housing market is on the move, and so, therefore, are the more traditional modern British paintings. Bullish estimates at Sotheby's, Wednesday (10.30am), on Edward Seago, Dorothea Sharp and – a glimmer of more refined taste – Gwen John, whose watercolour of a young girl is est £4,000-£6,000. More modern Brits at South Ken, Friday (10.30am).

### Countrywide auctions

**Manchester:** Domestic electrical appliances, including popcorn and bread makers, telephone answering machines, Thursday (11am) at 51a Broughton Lane. Auction International (0161-832 2400). **Plymouth:** Computers and peripherals at the Novatel, tomorrow (11am). South West Computer Auctions (01934-642437). **Headcorn, Kent:** A 1952 Rolls Bentley, a cabin cruiser, a Thirties model locomotive, among 1,000 lots at the Weald of Kent Golf Club, Monday (12 noon). Wealden Auction Galleries (01622-891568).

**Fairs**  
London Autograph Fair, Chesterfield Hotel, Charles Street, Mayfair, West London, tomorrow (01483-232423). London International Watch Fair, Music Rooms, 26 Molton Lane, London W1 tomorrow (0171-499 0564).

**Ardingly:** Tuesday-Wednesday, IACF (01636-702326). Further information about auctions and fairs: *Antiques Trade Gazette* and *Government Auction News* (fax information line 0336-423488).

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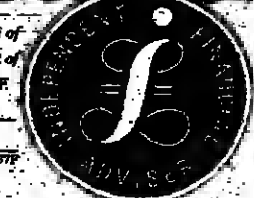
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TO FIND OUT WHAT'S ON TV, WHERE TO GO AND WHEN, READ THE EYE TODAY



Serena Mackesy  
In my week

The news was waiting on the answering machine. Christie's have pulled out. Seems some other celebrity's dress collection is going on sale

I feel like bursting into tears. No, really. Call me a wild card, but Sylvia McDermott won't be the only one breaking down in tears. All I wanted to do was spread a little love and happiness in the world, and for the second time this week I've been excluded. First of all I missed out on the Brit award I so richly deserved. Then they all went up on that podium - Posh Spice, Hot Spice, Dyed Spice, Ugly Spice and Thick Spice - and yet again they'd left me out of the limelight. How could they say that an Old Spice wouldn't appeal to 12-year-olds? I've given my life to that band. See how they repay me.

And then, came the news about the auction. There I was, coming home from an emotionally draining tour of photo-opportunities, and the news was waiting for me on the answering machine. Christie's have pulled out. Seems they've had a schedule clash, and some other world-class celebrity's dress collection is going on sale. Or that's their story. I see it as further proof that The Firm is out to get me. The Worldwide Fund for Self-Promotion will be deprived of tens of pounds, and I am left with a pile of business clogging my hallway. My self-esteem is at an all-time low. I might have to retire from public life altogether.

This is always the problem, of course, if you're a survivor like I am: you have a brilliant idea, and somebody else comes along and steals it. It occurred to me days ago that the solution to my ever-shrinking cupboard space would be to donate some of the contents to charity, with photographs of me wearing them to prove their authenticity. I have, of course, had dozens of approaches in the past from American organisations asking for items of my apparel for sale, but it seemed more fitting, more dignified, to offload them all at once with the maximum publicity. I have spent literally minutes deciding which of the contents of my wardrobe would be most productive in providing opportunities to reopen discussion of my public moments of

suffering. And now all that effort will be wasted.

It's a terrible tragedy, and makes us see just how lucky we are in the West. I have decided, despite this obvious conspiracy by my enemies, and because, in fact, I'm here to stay, to press ahead bravely with the sale, and expose below a list of the items available. Prices are not reserves, but estimates.

Lot 1: Oversized woollen jersey, fluffy bunny rabbit motif. Good for hiding behind trees in, but there were three of them in the wardrobe, and it was a bit crowded.



Lot 2: Katherine Hewitt "power" suit with marching band, powder blue, with ironing designer slogan T-shirt reading "strong woman". Originally thigh-length, but very let down.

Lot 3: Shalwar Kameez, two dozen, silk, from department store in Knightsbridge. Excellent apparel for non-political hospital visits in hot countries.

Lot 4: One personally endorsed copy of *For Love Alone* by Ivana Trump, hard-backed, dust-jacket missing. An inspiring tale of love, betrayal and survival. Essential reading for any woman who wishes to carve out a career based on her own achievements. (Remaindered at £4.99.)

Lot 5: One cream veil, extra-long, once used, slightly dusty. Lot 6: One pair of jodhpurs. Yes, I admit them, I was in love with them. But then I saw myself walking away in a full-length mirror and realised they made me look, well, squidgy.

Lot 7: One box Kleenex, partly used; some of contents crumpled from being pushed under bathroom door. (Priceless.)

Lot 8: Pumps, flat. Currently surplus to requirements.

Lot 9: Black satin ball-dress, puffed sleeves, low cleavage, full skirt. As seen exiting car at the Hairdressers for Somalia Ball, 1967. (Bids by invitation only.)

Lot 10: White silk ball-dress with matching bolero jacket, embroidered with bugle beads, slashed to the thigh. As seen exiting car at the Deprived Children's Tap and Ballet Gala, Royal Opera House, 1988. (£500 stalls, £800 dress circle.)

Lot 11: Blue one-sleeve ball-dress, matching tiara. As seen exiting car at the Hollywood Loves the Homeless Gala Dinner Dance and charity hoedown, 1989. (£10,000 a plate.)

Lot 12: Diamond and sapphire brooch depicting a lion and a unicorn rampant, locked in battle over a stylised crown. Crown slightly wobbly. Latin inscription reads "Mishcon Vincit Omnia". (£15m.)

Lot 13: Selection of cosmetics. Includes pearlescent white eyeshadow, with instructions for enlarging appearance of wounded female eyes.

Lot 14: Halo, tarnished; donated by mine clearance organisation, 1997. Comes with narrow-cut, crop-leg trousers and shatterproof visor.

Lot 15: Diamond pendant, in shape of heart, detail of ruby droplets. Most effective when worn on sleeve.

Lot 16: Tint, tear-stained. If anyone can find it in their hearts to give just a little for any of these items, closed bids will be accepted until the end of the week. Please remember, what may seem a lot to you could make all the difference to keeping me on the front page. I but I take great comfort when I think how much more difficult it is for other people. Anyway, must get on. I've got a couple of maids to fall out with before I meet the girls at San Lorenzo.

## Sounding off about noise



Robert Hanks  
the week on radio

It's a disheartening truth for anybody who works in or around radio that for most people, most of the time, radio isn't used as a source of information or entertainment. Instead, we employ it as a source of sound, an accompaniment to other things; and it's not as if those other things are the important, meaningful parts of our lives. You don't switch the radio on when you're really having a good time or you really need to concentrate; Radio 4 is rarely used as an aid to seduction. Instead, we use radio as an anaesthetic to dull the pain of all those chores necessary to maintain life - shaving, driving to work, sitting in an office, driving home again, washing up, ironing. When we can't talk to each other, we still like to feel the noise.

You might have expected noise to be a major theme in Stephen Connor's series of talks entitled *Noise* (Radio 3, Monday-Friday), advertised as an "exploration of the noises at the edges of our lives which make the soundtrack of the late 20th century". Nothing of the kind: the

thread which ran through all five programmes was the idea that in a world surrounded by more noise than ever before - the ticking of clocks, the revving of engines, the clacking of the Walkman, the trilling and blipping of phones, the whirs, clicks and beeps of computers - we tend to impose artificial meanings on noise, to construe them as a kind of speech. Dr Connor spoke of inhuman sounds pushing towards the condition of the voice, of the modern obsession with noise. We are, certainly, obsessed with noise in the sense that we seem to want an awful lot of

it. But the idea that obsession has anything to do with meaning seems plain wrong. Rather, we have become supremely tolerant of and indifferent to noise. What is happening in the modern world is that we are pushing voices towards the condition of inhuman sound, turning them into something merely mechanical.

A serendipitous piece of scheduling had *The Music Machine* (Radio 3, Monday-Friday) running a series of programmes on muzak, which Charles Hazlewood characterised as "the cement of modern life, which fills in all the gaps and excludes the draughts of silence". What became clear from these programmes was how far music is deprived of meaning when it is played constantly. It wasn't always like this - when Habitat first introduced in-store music in 1964, people would dance in the aisles; now, music teachers complain that students exposed to background music are becoming incapable of sitting down and listening. We've learnt to ignore the meanings in sound more completely than ever before, in

fact. You suspect that meaning only seems important when you have to sit down and write a series of talks on sound; and here, the effort to find meaning pushed Connor towards the condition of spouting significant-sounding nothings. In an episode devoted to sound and movement, for instance, he spoke of our ears being constantly assailed by "travelling sounds and the sounds of travel"; but all sounds are, by definition, travelling sounds - sound is one way energy travels. Elsewhere, he opined that "the irritation induced by the Walkman is an irritation at knowing you have been reduced to the condition of a ghost for this person." Well, partly, maybe: mostly it's an irritation at the horrible noise they make.

Without wanting to detract from the punchiness of Connor's writing, and the joyful elegance and subtlety of Tim Dee's production, which placed ambient noises all over Connor's words, most of what this series had to say struck me as absolute rubbish. Then again, does that matter? Who, after all, was listening?

## A case of mine over matter



Jasper Rees  
the week on television

In the days when Hitchcock ambled across shot in his own films, the authorial cameo role was a discreet visual trinket of no discernible purpose. Recently, the in-joke has been acquiring sophistication and depth. In *The People vs Larry Flynt*, the porn magnate takes a small, vengeful part as his own nemesis, the judge who once sentenced him to 25 years in prison. In *Fever Pitch*, Nick Hornby plays the coach of a school team hampered by a side run by his cinematic alter-ego: more than just an aside for the cognoscenti, it presents the author as the victim of his own runaway success.

*Nostromo* (BBC2, Sat) failed to break new ground in most areas, unless you count its record-breaking meagre ratings, but it did manage it in this one. The mine owner shot at the start of episode one was played by the executive producer Michael Weir; as the assassination set the whole ball rolling, this read like Weir's pre-emptive admission of *mea culpa*. Scriptwriter John Hale played the British imperialist who built the railway line through Costaguana's impenetrable interior - a role not dissimilar to his off-screen task of ploughing a linear narrative through Conrad's unyielding epic.

Where the railway made it through intact, the novel containing its sustained irreparable damage in the course of its four-part journey. What with the superabundance of plot to wade through, a typical sequence would offer a string of pencil-thin scenes heavily freighted with narrative cargo. Too many were undernourished and overworked, so that at times it was like watching a chain gang of anorexics carrying their own weight in baggage on their backs up a mountain. There was simply no time for the story to be lateral, to roam free like Spice Girl Geri's unruly torso at the Brit Awards (ITV, Tues).

By the final episode you'd just about worked out which goatly foreigner was which, but the script never quite kicked the habit of helpfully explaining itself to the bitter end, everyone was telling everyone else what they already knew, in the desperate, oddly obfuscating pursuit of clarity. "Dr Monaghan, who is, as you know, a doctor..." My husband Charles, to whom I am sure you will recall I am married... The script wasn't quite that solicitous, but sometimes felt it. You might have found a perverse logic to the unending repetition of names, as the novel is about the original man with no name, a kind of proto-Clint whose real name has been replaced by the possessive epithet of the title. But you'd have to enjoy tying yourself in knots as much as Conrad plainly did.

*Nostromo* also compromised its integrity by imposing English dialogue on Italian- and Spanish-speaking actors even when their characters were chatting among themselves. There were some brief, illogical forays into the tongues of the countries where the co-production money came from, and these were like chunks giving on to a promised land of vocal fluency from which the rest of the film was nonsensically barred. The series went down well in Italy, no doubt partly because they hate subtitles far more than they hate dubbing, and could even take on board the tortuous novelty

of Italian actors being dubbed into Italian. But British audiences are allergic to dubbing and, although spared that indignity, had to put up with some clunky post-synching of the non-English actors. Poor Claudio Amendola, as the enigmatic father, was fatally emasculated by his sluggish pronunciation. If Colin Firth gave the most imposing and naturalistic performance, he would be the first to admit that he had a head start.

And however overweening its ambition, the production was undermined by the paucity of its copious crowd scenes. Here was one deficiency which could have been made good with a little capital outlay. They needed the sort of frenzied multitude brazenly bussed in to liven up *The Brit Awards*. You were reminded of *Nostromo* when the Bee Gees won their lifetime achievement going and a clip showed them singing "New York Mining Disaster 1941". After its Rhodesian Mining Disaster 1996, also known as *Rhodes*, the BBC has now suffered a Colombian Mining Disaster 1997. Expect a drama about Arthur Scargill in about 12 months' time, in which, following the trend of the meaningful cameo, Scargill will make an appearance as the leader of the Coal Board.

### DAMIEN HURTS...and his painfully creative struggle

**DAMIEN** BABE, WHAT'S HAD THE MATTER? I JUST HAD THE MOST AWFUL NIGHTMARE!

I DREAMT THAT I SOLD A PAINTING FOR TEN GRAND, AND THEN ON MY WAY HOME I GOT MUGGED BY AN ARMED ROBBER WHO STOLE THE MONEY!!!

HORRIBLE! ONLY TEN GRAND FOR A PAINTING!!!

## Whatever happened to... Eddie 'the Eagle' Edwards

Where eagles dare

On 1 March 1988, Eddie the Eagle returned home to Britain a star, having come last in the Olympic ski-jumping event: 56th out of 56. He captured the nation's hearts as a great British loser: tripping over his baggage in front of the world's media; reading *The Sun* and waving to the crowds while lounging at the top of the 90ft slope before jumping. After the

games he travelled to Finland to record a pop song only to find the composer had just died of a heart attack. In the wake of his sporting triumphs, the plasterer from Cheltenham gave press conferences and promoted Eagle T-shirts. But he didn't let such success go to his head, staying with his parents in a house that backed on to a hospital. Handy for an ski-jump accident in 1989 in which he broke his

collarbone (bone-breaking being a regular pastime). He joked later that they "planned to do a brain scan to see if there was a brain there."

Crash landing

He didn't capture the hearts of the British Olympic Association, though, who banned him from competing at the Albertville games in 1992, on the grounds that he was

jumping without due care and attention.

Wings of hope

Eddie's trademark bad luck started to become increasingly unattractive. In 1993, he hit the headlines after clearing a 10-car ski-jump and damaging his own vehicle in the process (it had been parked too close to the ramp). By 1994, his star had begun to wane. Refused

entrance at Lillehammer because he was wearing slalom rather than jumping skis, he was reduced to making public appearances by other means, opening a holiday home in Devon in a chicken outfit because it was the closest they had to an eagle. His latest idea is a comeback at the Winter Olympics in 1998. But he's getting on a bit. He may be able to fly, but can he land?

James Akenast



### WEATHER

The British Isles

#### General Situation and 5-Day Outlook:

Pressure will remain low to the north and high to the south with fronts moving east across the British Isles.

Today, Scotland and the Northern and Western Isles will get a lot of wet and windy weather with a southwesterly gale. There will, though, be some bright spells to the south and east. Northern Ireland will be cloudy with heavy rain and a blustery south-west wind. England and Wales will be mostly dry with hazy sunshine. However, there will be lots of cloud and a strengthening south-east wind with showery rain to the north.

Rain will clear during Sunday, followed by sunshine, showers and gusty westerly winds. Monday will see scattered showers, but also some sunshine, and the wind will ease. Tuesday will be fine with sunshine and patchy cloud, but rain will spread into the northwest before moving south during Wednesday.

Brighter weather and showers will follow, but southern England may stay dry.

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Precip
Aberdeen	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20
Cardiff	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20
Edinburgh	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20
Glasgow	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20
London	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20
Manchester	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20
Newcastle	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20
Nottingham	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20
Oxford	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20
Sheffield	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20
Southampton	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20
St Andrews	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20
Stirling	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20
Swansea	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20
Torquay	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20
Wolverhampton	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20
Wrexham	10-15	10-20	10-20	10-20

### Europe and The World

World Weather Yesterday, Midday (GMT):

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Precip
Amsterdam	11-12	10-20	10-20	10-20
Antwerp	11-12	10-20	10-20	10-20
Brussels	11-12	10-20	10-20	10-20
Cologne	11-12	10-20	10-20	10-20
Düsseldorf	11-12	10-20	10-20	10-20
Frankfurt	11-12	10-20	10-20	10-20
Hamburg	11-12	10-20	10-20	10-20
Köln	11-12	10-20	10-20	10-20
Leipzig	11-12	10-20	10-20	10-20
Munich	11-12	10-20	10-20	10-20
Nuremberg	11-12	10-20	10-20	10-20
Paris	11-12	10-20	10-20	10-20
Rome	11-12	10-20	10-20	10-20
Stockholm	11-12	10-20	10-20	10-20
Vienna	11-12	10-20	10-20	10-20
Zurich	11-12	10-20	10-20	10-20

### The Sky at Night

The position of Comet Hale-Bopp through March and early April

Comet Hale-Bopp is now a spectacular first magnitude object, easily visible to the naked eye. It is expected to brighten by about another magnitude during the coming month. As anticipated, it has developed the two tails characteristic of comets: a broad curving dust tail and a narrower, straighter gas tail. Low power binoculars will afford a fine view. The darker your skies, the more you will see. A finding chart is hardly necessary since the comet is so conspicuous, but it serves to illustrate the comet's day-to-day passage against the stars. For the next couple of weeks, Comet Hale-Bopp is still best observed in the hour or two before dawn, low in the north-eastern sky. From the middle of the month, there will also be an evening viewing opportunity. The comet will hang low over the northwest horizon as the evening sky darkens. By the end of March, early evening will be the better time to observe it.

Jaqueline Mitton





## The big picture

**JFK**  
Sun 9.30pm BBC2

Writing about Oliver Stone's marathon take on the assassination of President Kennedy, this paper's Adam Mars-Jones referred to Stone "compulsively fingering the stigmata of the martyred Kennedy". Here it is then, in slow-motion, flashback – any way you want it – the events of November 1963, with Kevin Costner (Stone) as New Orleans DA Jim Garrison, trying to get to the bottom of things. Factually shaky and carried away by its own rhetoric, but Stone has done little that is better.

## Television preview

Recommended viewing this weekend  
by Gerard Gilbert

You've got to admire the demographic acumen of the space debris in the imported TV disaster movie *Asteroid* (Sat ITV). The rock in question could have landed anywhere on the globe – Siberia, say, or the Indian Ocean – but it chose to impact smack on top of the American Midwest, scoring a bulls-eye on a hydro-electric dam to boot.

*Asteroid* is a chip off the old *Independence Day* block, except that the intergalactic threat is impersonal this time, and more credible. Ask a dinosaur. Michael Biehn, who played the hero in *Terminator*, runs around manfully evacuating Kansas City; Annabella Sciorra is the astronomer who told them so. It's all right, really, and a lot less monotonous than *Independence Day*.

It's not a bad night for science fiction, in fact. *Crime Traveller* (Sat BBC1) has Michael French (shifty ladies' man David Wicks from *EastEnders*) as a police detective who owns a novel weapon in the fight against crime – a rickety, home-made time machine, knocked up by the department's science officer (Chloe Annett), in her living room. This is a fabulous idea, delivered

like a Lew Grade ATV drama circa 1972. I don't how deliberate this was, but the result is a hoot. Sue Johnston plays their boss, expostulating away at each crime scene, Michael Winner-style. The only doubt is with Michael French. Just as some TV actors don't transfer well to the big screen, I'm not sure French travels that well from soap to the action genre. He acts better with his eyes than with his arms and legs.

After *The Real Holiday Show*, a real marriage show. *Love Life* (Sun C4) puts hidden cameras into the home of a couple whose marriage is going through the emotional equivalent of northern Greenland during a cold snap. Enter Dr Janet Reibstein and her five key-words for a happy relationship: "protection", "balance", "focus", "gratitude" and "pleasure". This week's little lesson concerns "protection", or "your partner is your uniquely". And there are examples of real-life happy marriages for us to study – so that we can recognise "protection" in its natural habitat. Uncertain partners might like to watch alone.

Which brings us neatly to *Performance*, which begins a new run of filmed stage drama with the

**Crime Traveller** Sat 8.10pm BBC1  
**Performance: Company** Sat 8.30pm BBC2  
**Asteroid** Sat 9.10pm ITV  
**Love Life** Sun 7.30pm C4  
**Omnibus** Sun 10.20pm BBC1  
**The South Bank Show** Sun 11pm ITV

Dommar Warehouse's 1996 version of Stephen Sondheim's *Company* (Sat BBC2). Amazingly, this is the first West End revival of this fabulous musical since it first appeared back in 1971. Apart from the stuff about smoking pot for the first time, Sondheim's witty take on the joys and pitfalls of being married/single hasn't dated in the slightest. In fact, in the case of Britain, it is probably more contemporary now than it was in the early 1970s.

The South Bank Show (Sun ITV) takes The Bee Gees back to their Mancunian roots and demonstrates that, like all great pop survivors (although association with *Saturday Night Fever* nearly killed them), they are first and foremost great song-writers. Omnibus (Sun BBC1) has a tantalising portrait of the 88-year-old Count Balthus, his real name, Balthus is probably best known for his "enigmatic" portraits of young girls – enigmatic in the sense that the young girls are eroticised. Balthus swears he is not, as he puts it, a follower of Nabokov. "The young-girl issue" as Balthus puts it, comes to dominate the film. A pity.



## The big match

**Five Nations: England v France**  
Sat 2.25pm BBC1

Terrestrial viewers' last chance to watch this fixture (all of England's Twickenham games have been bought by BSkyB) and this is the one which will decide where the silverware goes this year. Phil the Glanville may have called for a clasp-down on the pre-match festivities, but don't necessarily expect the children to last on the pitch. The Tricolours are without all their first-choice players: three-quarter line, but welcome back, Alain Penaud (above), captain of European club champions, Bryne.

# Saturday television and radio

## BBC 1

- 7.00 *Harry and the Hendersons* (R/S) (1840604).
- 7.25 *News, Weather* (3282371).
- 7.30 *Children's BBC*. Felix the Cat (3889894), 7.45 *Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway* (3889894), 8.10 *The Real Adventures of Jimmy Neutron* (5008468), 8.35 *The Flintstones* (5277791).
- 9.00 *Live and Kicking*. Record company boss Paul Burger is in the Hot Seat, Ant and Dec and Eternal perform their latest singles, and Susan Tully talks about Red Nose Day '97 (S) (78008975).
- 12.12 *Weather* (7637826).
- 12.15 *Grandstand*. Football Focus (2353333). 1.00 *News* (8197517). 1.05 *Racing from Newbury*: the 1.15 race (4786553). 1.25 *Skiing*: the women's downhill from Nagano, Japan (59591604). 1.40 *Racing from Newbury*: the 1.45 race (83745062). 1.55 *Rugby Union* (83768913). 2.10 *Racing from Newbury*: the 2.15 race (36396826). 2.25 *Rugby Union* (England v France). Live coverage from Twickenham (kick-off 3pm). See *The Big Match*, above (35667246). 4.40 *Final Score* (3693536). 5.00 *Rugby Union*: extended highlights of Scotland v Ireland (6913).
- 5.30 *News, Weather* (7) (383975).
- 5.40 *Regional News and Weather* (598246).
- 5.45 *David's Diary* (R/S) (256731).
- 6.15 *The New Adventures of Superman* (S) (780623).
- 7.00 *Live and Kicking*. The bearded prankster puts one over on Gordon Burns, while the Spice Girls and Ronnie Corbett drop by (S) (626159).
- 7.50 *The National Lottery Live*. With Wet Wet Wet and Joanne May (S) (136975).
- 8.10 *Crime Traveller*. See *Preview*, above (S) (796178).
- 9.00 *News and Sport, Weather* (7) (944325).
- 9.20 *Dancing in the Dark* (Bill Carroll 1995 US). One woman's fight against the lecherous advances of her father-in-law, a pillar of the Texas legal community (TV) (7264823).
- 10.50 *Match of the Day*. Newcastle United v Southampton is the main event (S) (8525389).
- 12.00 *Chalk*. School-slitting teacher syster (R) (23314).
- 12.30 *Top of the Pops*. From yesterday, featuring the Spice Girls, Sash!, Republica, Cathy Dennis and Bush (R/S) (77647).
- 1.00 *Silver Dream Racer* (David Wicks 1980 UK). A London garage mechanic dreams of being a top motorcycle racer. When his brother is killed in an accident, he inherits the motorcycle his brother had been working on, and sets out to prove himself on the racing circuit (S) (39280).
- 2.45 *Weather* (3440173). To 2.50pm.

**REGIONS.** 2.25 *Rugby Union*: Scotland v Ireland. 4.35 *England v France*. 5.25 *Rugby Union*: Scotland v Ireland. 4.40 *Afterschool Sportsnews*. 5.00 *England v France*. 9.20 *Mind the Gap*. 9.50 *Sportsnews* – Match of the Day. 11.00 *Football*: Dancing in the Dark. 12.30 *Chalk*. 1.00 *Top of the Pops*. Wales: 10.20pm Satellite City.

## BBC 2

- 6.20 *Open University: Disappearing Childhood* (7555642). 6.45 *Earthquakes: Seismology at Work* (9356401). 7.10 *Using TV* (9199352).
- 8.00 *Open University: The World of the Future* (988120).
- 10.30 *The State of the Nation* (R) (5560246).
- 10.35 *Carrier's Caribbean*. Cookery (R) (7320807).
- 10.50 *The Sky at Night*. Quasars explained (2524197).
- 11.10 *Bringing Up Baby* (Howard Hawks 1938 US). A triple bill of Howard Hawks movies begins with his beautifully judged screwball comedy, which has paleontologist Cary Grant losing a vital dinosaur bone to heiress Katharine Hepburn's dog but ending up with the best set of bones going – Hepburn's (R) (82979913).
- 12.50 *Film 97* with Barry Newman (S) (6931807).
- 1.20 *Sergeant York* (Howard Hawks 1941 US). The second in the Hawks triple bill is relatively conventional for the director – and stars Gary Cooper as the true-life pacifist hero who becomes a hero of the Great War (19726913).
- 3.25 *Howard Hawks: American Artist*. Documentary about Hawks (S) (1166401).
- 4.25 *Rio Lobo* (Howard Hawks 1970 US). The Hawks trilogy rounds off with the director's final film, a sort of weary rehash of *Rio Bravo* and *El Dorado*, with lots of jokes about the size of John Wayne's girl and some lackadaisical business about Vanities (53383159).
- 6.15 *Crufts 97* (S) (279642).
- 6.45 *News and Sport, Weather* (7) (294178).
- 7.00 *Correspondent*. Emily Buchanan reports on a eugenics programme run by the Canadian province of Alberta until 1972. Plus, Nigerian writer Donu Kogbara visits Uganda to learn about a campaign to abolish female circumcision (S) (722178).
- 7.45 *Branded: Levi's Blue Dreams*. Levi jeans were created for Californian gold miners 145 years ago. The 501 brand is a low-tech product consisting of one-and-a-half yard pieces of denim, five buttons and five rivets, and the mark-up is in the order of 40 per cent (S) (729651).
- 8.25 *Crufts 97* (S) (279651).
- 8.30 *Performance: Company*. See *Preview*, above (S) (796178).
- 10.50 *Harrison Bergeron* (Bruce Pittman 1995 Can). TV movie based on a story by Kurt Vonnegut. In 2053, anti-intellectual forces have inherited the earth and everyone must wear an electronic headband which scrambles intelligent thought. What's wrong with the good old Sun? (32274333).
- 12.25 *Windows on the World*. Film about Edward Varise, the revolutionary French composer (S) (8815192).
- 1.25 *Global Videotext*. Then *Weather* (6634622).
- 2.1. 5.00pm.
- 2.15 *Conference 97*. 3.45 *Film*: The North Star. 5.30 *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. Wales: 11.10 *Howard Hawks: American Artist*. 12.10 *Film*: Rio Lobo. 2.00 *Wales Liberal Democrats Party Conference*. 4.00 *Film*: Sergeant York.

## ITV/London

- 6.00 *GMTV*. 6.00 *News*. 6.10 *Mole in the Hole*. 6.30 *Professor Bubble*. 6.50 *Bug Alert*. 7.15 *Dragonfly*. 7.45 *Disney's Wake Up in the Wild*. 8.00 *Cartoon Network*. 8.15 *Gargoyles*. 8.30 *Scratchy and Co.*. 8.45 *Alphie's Attic*. Impressionist Earl Grey and the cast of children's TV show *Soap* are the guests. Plus, a location report on Peter Andre's new video, shot in Los Angeles (S) (24495994).
- 11.30 *The Chart Show* (S) (38888).
- 12.30 *News*. A look at the life and work of leading young art designer, Philip Treacy (36352).
- 1.00 *News, Weather* (7) (81993913).
- 1.05 *London Weekend Today* (7) (81992284).
- 1.10 *Champions' League Special*. Previews of this week's quarter-finals, including the Manchester United match against FC Porto (70283438).
- 1.40 *Racing Show*. On the move in which teenager on the preparation and launch of the Jackie Stewart Formula One team (1385197).
- 2.40 *Stuntmasters* (R) (5383739).
- 3.10 *ITV Please Turn Over* (Gerald Thomas 1960 UK). An almost quintessential title for a Gerald Thomas comedy (this is the man who helmed virtually all the Carry On movies) in which teenager Jean Kent causes scandal in suburbia by publishing a racy novel involving her neighbours. Ted Ray, Leslie Phillips, Charles Hawtrey and Joan Sims co-star (77013265).
- 4.45 *News, Sports Results, Weather* (7) (3687975).
- 5.05 *London Weekend Tonight* (7) (850197).
- 5.20 *Chuzzlew*. Ex-*Coronation Street* regular Nicole Eggert guest-stars (S) (8018315).
- 5.45 *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch*. Thoroughly old-fashioned sitcom, with echoes of *Bewitched* and, more clearly, *The Munsters*. It's the winter break and Aunt Zelda and Hilda take Sabrina to Mars for a family skiing vacation (S) (856246).
- 6.10 *You Bet! Paul Ross*. Malandra Burrows and Gary Bushell play the roles of a basketball player from the London Leopards tries to score points blindfold, a Sheffield diving team jumps through hoops and an *Emmerdale* fanatics attempts to identify clips from just four seconds of dialogue (S) (265642).
- 7.10 *Blind Date* (S) (855159).
- 8.10 *ITV Be Right on the Night*. With the avuncular *ITV* host, see *Preview*, above (S) (4046178).
- 10.55 *News, Weather, Lottery Results* (7) (821333).
- 11.10 *ITV Deliver Them from Evil: The Taming of Alta* (1993). Fact-based TV movie in which a religious fanatic and father of eight (a thoroughly unlikely Harry Hamlin) lays siege to the Utah hospital where his wife was sterilised (794420).
- 12.55 *ITV Head On* (Michael Grant 1980 Can). Sally Kellerman and Stephen Lack play two drivers involved in a head-on car crash. They swap legal wrangles they kiss (5499227).
- 2.25 *ITV News Review* (9926227).
- 3.15 *Club Nation* (R) (2807444).
- 4.10 *ITV Sport Classics* (R) (41271579).
- 4.30 *Top of the Pops* (S) (6419229).
- 4.40 *Couch*. Double exposure of the sitcom about an American football coach (S) (7239956).
- 5.30 *News* (19111). To 6.00am.

## Channel 4

- 6.00 *Sesame Street* (R) (69352).
- 7.00 *Dumb and Dumber* (S) (275551).
- 7.20 *Dennis* (R) (3971604).
- 7.45 *First Edition* (R/S) (5976159).
- 8.00 *Teatime with Peter* (R) (24352).
- 9.00 *Morning Line* (S) (47569).
- 10.00 *Gazzetta Football Italia* (62866).
- 11.00 *NBA 24/7*. Houston Rockets v Los Angeles Lakers (S) (15710).
- 12.00 *Missing Parents*. Short film drama about an obnoxious teenager who returns home to find his parents have run away (R) (2360623).
- 12.35 *Racing from Doncaster*. Jim McGrath introduces the 12.50 Light Infantry Plate, 1.25 Mitsubishi Shogun Trophy, 2.00 Vella Parubucke Grimthorpe Handicap Chase and the 2.30 Air Power Products Handicap Hurdle (S) (45439975).
- 2.50 *Pets Smith Specialities* (2905913).
- 3.00 *ITV Hans Christian Andersen* (Charles Vidor 1952 US). Biopic bearing very little resemblance to the true story of the Danish fairy-story creator. Danny Kaye takes the title role (7) (90248642).
- 5.05 *Brookside Omnibus* (S) (2217604).
- 6.30 *Right to Reply* (S) (7).
- 7.00 *A Week in Politics*. With Vincent Hanna and Andrew Rawnsley (S) (4642).
- 8.00 *Fragile Kingdoms*. Focus on a trio of American children living an extraordinary life deep in the heart of the Amazon, where their parents are dedicating their lives to studying forest animals and plants with the help of the Bambuti pygmies (7) (6802).
- 9.00 *Last Chance Lottery*. Show celebrating life's losers, which is kind of ironic (S) (6046).
- 10.00 *Eurotrash*. Italian porn star Jessica Rizzo and her new perfume, Erotica, Paco Rabanne and his apocalyptic visions, and the reasons for *Baywatch* star David Hasselhoff's popularity in Germany. It's his singing, apparently (R/S) (81951).
- 10.30 *The Show*. Another deconstructed chat show with Bill Mills and the backstage team (S) (6820951).
- 11.35 *Hit Street Blues*. The seminal 1990s Boston cop series (S) (855159).
- 12.35 *The Client*. Drama series set in the American law courts, based on John Grisham's best-selling thriller. Reggie defends a jailed schoolboy who is accused of killing her date (S) (5358647).
- 1.30 *The Giltie Show*. From last night, with guests Patsy Palmer (Blanca from *EastEnders*) and former Page 3 model Sam Fox (S) (24686).
- 2.00 *Rock Lake*. People who want to declare on television that they have had enough of their ex-lovers in the hope that the spurned partners will finally get the message (R/S) (8587647).
- 2.45 *Beavis and Butt-Head* (R/S) (5500395).
- 3.10 *Flava*. The Fugees, Busta and B Real are among the artists (S) (65034208).
- 3.40 *Bliss This House* (R/S) (13455208).
- 4.10 *Film Night Special*. The English Patient. The making of (R/S) (8392463).
- 5.05 *The Best Specials* (S) (1005579). To 6.20am.

## ITV/Regions

- AREA 1**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (36352). 1.05 *Anglia News* (81992284). 1.40 *World of Wonder* (2667401). 2.15 *Baywatch* (2529994). 3.05 *Funny on Jack* (2521642). 5.05 *Anglia News and Sport* (1850197). 12.55 *Cartoon Knowledge* (5354821). 1.55 *Film: The Great American Sea Scandal* (138173). 3.30 *Sound Bites* (67925937). 3.40 *Helter Skelter* (9035918). 4.30 - 5.30pm *Funny Bunter* (26482).
- CENTRAL**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Premiere* (36352). 1.05 *Central News* (81992284). 1.40 *Film: The Night of the Hunter* (2521642). 3.30 *Motion News* (8618159). 3.50 *soaQuest* (5942255). 5.05 *Central News* (8045807). 5.10 - 5.20 *Central Match*: *Goats Eden* (3819994). 4.10 *Jockeys* (4707531). 5.20 - 5.30pm *Funny Bunter* (26482).
- ITV WALES**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (36352). 1.05 *ITV News* (81992284). 1.40 *Something in the Blood* (138173). 2.40 *World of Wonder* (2667401). 3.05 *Film: The GRAY PANT* (5221642). 5.05 *ITV News and Sports Results* (880197). 12.55 *Cartoon Knowledge* (5354821). 3.40 *Helter Skelter* (9035918). 4.30 - 5.30pm *Funny Bunter* (26482).
- ITV WEST**  
As London except: 1.10pm *Sportsnews* (1365652). 1.45 *ITV News* (81992284). 1.40 *ITV News* (81992284). 2.30 *Film: The Night of the Hunter* (2667401). 3.30 *Film: The Night of the Hunter* (2667401). 4.10pm *The UK* (4331623).
- ITV SOUTH**  
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## Who controls China



# Magnificent Seven start secretive struggle to guide China into the new millennium

Behind the scenes of the People's Congress, the jockeying is under way, writes **Teresa Poole**

Peking — China's election year formally kicks off this morning with the start of the annual meeting of the National People's Congress (NPC), the country's parliament.

No one need expect surprises: the 3,000 delegates will rubber stamp new legislation in the wake of Deng Xiaoping's death just as they have always done. But behind the scenes the real jockeying for positions is starting, with several top jobs up for grabs over the next 12 months.

Even without Deng's death, this was always going to be the year when President Jiang Zemin had to cement his position as first among equals in the post-Deng era.

But, as in the West, Chinese politics involves a considerable element of keeping your allies happy and containing your enemies. In China this year it is a question of who gets what position. One Western diplomat

said this week: "There is still a lot to be fought over, but this does not mean they will fall out in some overt fashion."

A problem with interpreting Chinese power structures is that job titles have often counted for little. Thus, Deng held no formal position after 1990 but remained the most influential person in China.

In contrast, Mr Jiang has had every possible title heaped on him, including head of state, party chief, and military commander, to bolster his position as a seemingly weak leader.

Another confusing factor is that the important state personnel decisions due to be implemented at the NPC next March, such as the selection of a new prime minister, will in fact be made at the Communist party congress this Autumn.

The manoeuvrings ahead of this year's NPC. A full congress is held only once every five years, with annual plenum meetings in between. It is the most important date in China's five-year political cycle.

State, party and military top personnel shuffle the top jobs between themselves. As the chart shows, the same faces appear on both sides of the supposed divide between the Communist party and the organs of state government.

Mr Jiang's face appears as head of the party, the state, and the party's Central Military Commission (CMC), which controls the army. He heads the

"Magnificent Seven" of Chinese politics — the members of the standing committee of the Politburo, which is the most powerful party grouping.

Two of the seven, Mr Jiang and General Liu, are also on the party CMC. Five of the seven, Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Qiao Guo, Li Ruihuan, and Zhu Rongji, all have senior state positions. The personnel decisions which have to be made this year include: Will Mr Jiang keep all three top jobs? Who will take over as prime minister in March 1998 when Li Peng steps down?

Leading contenders are the Politburo member and Jiang ally, Wu Bangguo, and vice prime ministers, Li Lanqing and Zhu Rongji. What new position can Mr Jiang offer Mr Li to secure his loyalty?

Current thinking is that Mr Jiang wants to re-invent the post of party chairman (a position held by Mao Zedong) for himself, and Mr Li would be offered a vice-chairmanship.

But would that satisfy Mr Li, whose unpopularity seems to

rule him out for any high profile representative post, such as president?

What will Mr Jiang do with Mr Qiao, a man billed as a quasi-reformer who has built a power base as head of the NPC? These two men do not get along, and this is Mr Jiang's most challenging gamble.

There is nothing in the constitution which says Mr Qiao cannot continue at the NPC, but he is expected to step down because of his age. Would he be satisfied with another deputy chairmanship of the party?

Will Mr Jiang finally be able to retire Generals Liu and Zhang from the party CMC, and install two more of his military allies?

Shuffling the pack will also mean bringing in a crop of new faces over the next year, the men who will lead China in the 21st century. For the moment, Mr Jiang remains the favourite.

reasons while another said it first wanted to count Chinese representatives in Hong Kong.

Mr Yung said that the lead underwriter, Sun Hung Kai International Ltd, told Next that it was pulling out. A spokesperson for the company said the decision was purely commercial.

But the message is clear: Peking doesn't like Mr Lai.

He probably knew that already. In 1994 he published an editorial that called the Chinese

group — which owns Hong Kong's most popular weekly, the *Apple Daily*, the fastest growing newspaper in the British colony — has been publicly critical of China for some time. This time, such criticism seems to have cost it dearly.

Yung Wai-hong, the group chairman, said that Next approached a dozen merchant bankers to underwrite the flotation, and most stayed out. Mr Yung said one cited political

## Fortune frowns on he who dares to criticise

Andrew Marshall

As Hong Kong marches towards a future under Chinese rule, who's in and who's out? The answers are not good for those who want to kick against the pricks.

January Lai, publisher of the outspoken *Apple Daily* newspaper, yesterday suffered a financial blow when the chief underwriter of a planned share issue pulled out. His Next media

group — which owns Hong Kong's most popular weekly, the *Apple Daily*, the fastest growing newspaper in the British colony — has been publicly critical of China for some time. This time, such criticism seems to have cost it dearly.

Yung Wai-hong, the group chairman, said that Next approached a dozen merchant bankers to underwrite the flotation, and most stayed out. Mr Yung said one cited political

## Airlines and hotels strike gold as the Hong Kong handover looms

Stephen Vines  
Hong Kong

Visitors wanting to come to Hong Kong to witness the historic handover of power in four

months' time can still make bookings. But they will need a healthy bank balance.

One travel agent estimated that hotels are asking three times their normal room rates

for the period around 30 June. The rates are "horrendous", said another agent, who declined to be named in case of damaging relations with hotels.

He added: "It's understandable: how many handovers can you have?"

Airlines are cutting out all discounted tickets, thus in effect doubling the price of economy-class tickets.

Virgin Atlantic is imposing a surcharge.

According to Mark Siladi, the airline's regional manager, Virgin "is trying to protect the consumer and ensure that during the period of the handover of sovereignty as many people as possible are able to return to Hong Kong."

The colony's official tourism organisations are sensitive to suggestions of profiteering.

Peter Randall, a spokesman for the Hong Kong Tourist Association (HKTA), said that the HKTA had done a survey of 78 per cent of the colony's hotels and found that a third of capacity was still open for booking.

Harbourside and luxury hotels are fully booked, as are most of the lower-price hotels and hostels but in the medium-price range availability is fairly good away from the central areas.

One problem is that many of those wanting to be in Hong Kong for this period have made multiple bookings to ensure their presence.

British Airways, for example, has discovered that a quarter of its passengers have made more than one booking. These double bookings are now being cleared.

Cathay Pacific Airways now insists that tickets for the handover period are paid for within seven days of reservations being made.

This rapidly flushes out double-bookings, but not to the extent of clearing space in flights in the few days before the handover.

British Airways currently has a waiting-list of 1,200 passengers for these few days.

Negotiations are about to start with Hong Kong's civil aviation authorities to permit both British Airways and Cathay to add extra flights.

Meanwhile, there are a large

number of daily flights to Hong Kong from places such as the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore.

These flights are less heavily booked than the direct flights to Hong Kong from Britain or North America.

Planning for lavish handover parties with international visitors started a couple of years ago.

Ted Marr, one of Hong Kong's most famous international party-planners, is co-ordinating a typically lavish event lasting several days which will leave little change out of £5,000.

Few hotel rooms are left at less than £100 a night but it will be easy to pay some £600 a

night in the bigger hotels. The bulk of available rooms are at prices in the middle of this range.

The local tourist industry is aware that the handover boom might prove to be a double-edged sword.

"If we don't handle it well", said one executive, "we might see a big drop in business after it's all over."

The HKTA is already planning to avert this problem. From 1 July it will launch an ambitious programme of tourist events and discount schemes involving hotels, restaurants and shops to lure back visitors.

Indeed, the best advice for would-be visitors may be to wait and see Hong Kong once the new era begins. It will be much, much cheaper, that is for certain.

What's the bill

Normal price of discounted economy return airfare from London to Hong Kong: £800 approximately. Full-price economy fare during handover period: £1,200.

Medium-range hotel room at normal periods: £120 per night.

Medium-range hotel room during handover: £300 per night.

Luxury-range hotel room at normal periods: £300 per night.

Luxury-range hotel room during handover: £600 per night.



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## obituaries / gazette

## Sir Duncan McDonald

As managing director of Bruce Peebles, power station equipment engineers, as chief executive of Reyrolle Parsons, switch-gear engineers, and as chairman of Northern Engineering Industries, Duncan McDonald had more in common with his heroes Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-59), Daniel Gooch (1816-89) and the great Victorian engineer-managers, than modern industrialist-accountant managers who work in terror of stock market analysts and the havoc they may cause. It is perhaps an indication of how industrial perceptions have changed in the last quarter of a century, not necessarily for the better, that McDonald told me proudly: "I have raised the number of people working for us in our companies to nearly 35,000." He would not like to have said: "I have cut the workforce, becoming more cost-effective and have done x per cent better than last year."

What McDonald cared about, explained Hamish Morrison, former chief executive of the Scottish Council of Development and Industry, was giving people worthwhile engineering work which would give them job satisfaction and be useful to society and Britain. I never did discover what McDonald's personal politics were, but frequently sitting beside him on the Edinburgh-London plane I came to know that he had an obsessive horror of human waste in the shape of unemployment

and a demonic energy in trying to do something about it by providing skilled jobs.

He was a passionate power engineer who believed, above all else, that the prime mover in the power station, the turbine, had to be perfect. If not there would be many other problems. He motivated people, who recognised that he knew where every proverbial nut and bolt should go in the burning instrument. I saw at first hand how he was admired on account of his engineering expertise and an ability to understand the complexities of any task being carried out by his employees. On many occasions, I went round the Bruce Peebles plant at Broxburn, West Lothian with him as the local MP and sensed the respect in which he was held by shop-floor and junior managers alike. Shirt-sleeved and immaculate, he made a point of knowing everyone in the factory by name. The result was that when the transformer industry was undergoing periods of traumatic change in the 1960s and 1970s, he was given co-operation by the Amalgamated Engineering Union. Soft-spoken, with a twinkle in his eye, McDonald's philosophy was that huge problems, technical and human, were there to be addressed quietly, unostentatiously and with sustained intelligence.

He was horn within sight of the Forth Bridge, the son of a cable jointer with the then South of Scotland Electricity Board, now Scottish Power.

During his childhood in Inverkeithing he had been inspired by Sir John Fowler's wonderful cantilevers. Whenever I saw him he would say to me as the MP for South Queensferry, "Are you looking after my bridge properly? Are you sure that rust, which never sleeps, is not getting a hold?"

He was an inspiration to those of us who campaign for properly maintaining the greatest engineering monument to the 19th century. It was a great pleasure to him when the company of Sir William Arrol was added to his Northern Engineering conglomerate since Arrol had been the structural engineers responsible in the 1890s for the Forth Bridge's construction.

In the early years of the Second World War he obtained first class honours in electrical engineering at Edinburgh University, and went on reserved occupation as a graduate apprentice to British Thompson Houston at Rugby. When the war ended, BTH earmarked him for research and development in transformer design which suited his talents perfectly.

In 1954 he transferred to Bruce Peebles Industries and became their chief transformer designer from 1954 to 1959, when he was promoted as chief engineer. In 1962 he became managing director, and in 1974 chairman and chief executive, both of Bruce Peebles and of Reyrolle Parsons. Bob Smith, Bruce Peebles' quality and safety manager, who worked with him from 1954, described McDonald as "superb during the difficult mergers of Bruce Peebles, Reyrolle Parsons and Clark Chapman. He respected the identity of Bruce Peebles and kept it as a core large transformer company, thereby helping the morale of the workforce. Equally the managers of Reyrolle Parsons and Clark Chapman were pleased at the dignity he accorded them."

His relations with employees were further enhanced by the fact that he was a keen fisherman and a regular member of the Bruce Peebles fishing club. Many good relationships were formed on the banks of Scottish rivers at the expense of trout.

He was particularly interested in developments for nuclear power-stations and was elected to the board of the National Nuclear Corporation. Truth to tell, he was always ambiguous about nuclear power at a time when great efficiencies were being made in the winning of fossil fuel. He was impressed by the advanced gas-cooled reactors and praised Dr Robin Jeffery's engineering feat in the creation of Torness. He was less enthusiastic about both the Magnox stations and the problems of Dungeness B and elsewhere among the next generation of nuclear power-stations.

For ten years (1983-92) McDonald was on the board of Scottish Accident, whose chairman, the Earl of Airrie, told me

yesterday: "He was much loved not only on the board but by managers and their colleagues. He had a wonderful way with people. He put his points in a way that was most acceptable."

McDonald was a decentraliser by conviction and in his latter years felt that running a great company out of Newcastle put him at a disadvantage with those of his competitors whose headquarters could intermingle with government in London. He felt hurt that the metropolitan stock market was never lent to Northern Engineering Industries and suspected that they felt that



McDonald welcomes Margaret Thatcher to Northern Engineering Industries' plant in the 1980s

Photograph: Newcastle Journal

that he resisted a strong personal temptation on the grounds that the chairman of this prestigious body ought to be based in Scotland and not in the North of England.

Duncan McDonald was a man of international vision and travelled the world in search of orders to keep his employees in work. In February 1985, in the company of such heavyweights as Lord King of British Airways, Richard Giordano of British Oxygen and Denis Jackson of Rolls-Royce he was one of ten prominent industrialists who went under the leadership of

Lord Young, then Mrs Thatcher's Minister without Portfolio, to China. He was the first man I knew to emphasise the potential of the Pacific Rim. His hallmark was vision.

**Tom Dalyell**

Duncan McDonald, turbine engineer and industrialist: born Inverkeithing, Fife 20 September 1921; CBE 1976; Group Managing Director, Northern Engineering Industries 1977-80; Chairman 1980-86; Rt 1983; married 1955 Jane Guckian (three sons, one daughter); died Edinburgh 23 February 1997.

## T. H. Bridgewater

Tony Bridgewater encompassed in his own life and career the development of British television as we now know it.

Tony, or Bridgie as many BBC colleagues called him (not even his mother used his given name of Thornton), started working with John Logie Baird in 1928. He was involved with Baird's early experimental television transmissions of the 30-line mechanical system which went from his studio in Covent Garden via Savoy Hill to a BBC medium-wave radio transmitter on the roof of Selfridges.

They had to take place after the BBC's late-night dance music had closed down. Because there was only one transmitter available the crude flickering pictures and the sound could not be synchronised and had to be radiated in alternating two-minute bursts. In 1932 when the BBC took over full responsibility for these experimental programmes Bridgewater, with

two other television engineers, joined the Corporation. The operation moved into the newly built Broadcasting House and Bridgewater often announced the programmes himself from a studio shared with Henry Hall's dance band.

In 1936 he led the studio team at Alexandra Palace when the world's first public service of high-definition television opened. Baird's mechanical system, by then on 240 lines, alternated weekly with the 405-line electronic system developed by EMI to establish which was the better. In a few months EMI was the clear winner. The mechanical system was dropped, to Baird's bitter disappointment.

Bridgewater supervised, and personally directed, the first BBC television outside broadcast: the 1937 Coronation procession of King George VI as it passed Hyde Park Corner. The brand-new mobile control room had been delivered from



Bridgewater's experiments with John Logie Baird. Photograph: BBC

EMI only days before hand. There was momentary panic when the equipment went dead just as the Coronation procession approached. There was no time for anything but that classic television remedy, a strong bang from the fist of one of the EMI engineers standing by. Fortunately it worked, and the King's smile to the close-up

camera made the next day's press headlines.

Bridgewater was in charge of the engineering aspects of many BBC outside broadcasts remembered by older viewers with admiration: the 1948 Olympic Games, the first television programme from across the Channel, the Coronation of the Queen, her first Christmas television broadcast from Sandringham, the immensely complicated and moving coverage of Sir Winston Churchill's funeral and countless other ceremonies and great sporting events. He organised television broadcasts from submarines below the surface of the sea and from aeroplanes above the surface of the land.

Bridgewater was kind, considerate and courteous. One of his outstanding qualities as an engineer was his ability to explain electronic complexities in terms readily understood by non-engineers. I was particularly grateful for this when we were

together involved in planning the introduction of BBC2 with its formidable problems of conversion to 625-line UHF transmission standards and as well as to colour capability. Bill Cotton used to say that before coming to work at White City he not only didn't understand television, he didn't even understand electricity, until Bridgie explained both to him.

Bridgewater retired from the BBC in 1968, having been the Chief Television Engineer for the previous six years. His work for television, however, was far from over. He lectured and wrote articles for various technical journals and also contributed a scholarly monograph on A.A. Campbell Swinton, a leading pioneer of electronic, as opposed to mechanical, television. This was published by the Royal Television Society, to which he gave outstanding service over a great period. He had been elected a Fellow of the Television Society in 1950, long before it became

Royal. He was its Honorary Treasurer for 20 years, its Chairman of Council, and the recipient of its Gold Medal.

In latter years Bridgewater's long and unique personal experience of the development of television made him a particularly valuable founder member of the RTS History and Archives Specialist Group. He remembered all sorts of fascinating and sometimes horrifying details. One day when we were discussing the impermanence of recorded television material he casually mentioned that in the very early days of videotape he happened to know of at least one pre-recorded play and one pre-recorded opera which had been accidentally wiped before transmission.

Tony Bridgewater's interest in broadcasting began as a schoolboy in Canada where his family was temporarily living. He constructed first a crystal set, and then a better one with valves, and was thrilled to be

able to pick up signals from the United States. On return to England he was trained in wireless telegraphy and at the age of 18 he went to sea as a wireless operator. He then worked for the Post Office on high power transmitters including those occasionally used for broadcasting to the Dominions, as they then were.

He read the technical journals avidly, and learnt of Baird's television experiments. In 1928 he managed to get an introduction to the Scottish inventor, who was beginning to expand from a one-man business. Baird engaged him and within weeks he was involved with Baird's first demonstration of recognisable, if very crude, colour television to the British Association, meeting that year in Glasgow.

On 1 September 1929 Alexandra Palace abruptly had to cease transmitting television, for defence reasons. Bridgewater joined the RAF and worked on radar, for which he was men-

tioned in dispatches. On demobilisation, with the rank of Squadron Leader, he rejoined the BBC to help restart television in time for the Victory Parade in June 1946.

Tony Bridgewater's own considerable scholarship came, he used to say, from association with a well-educated wife. He married Jean Bartlett in 1934 and they had one son, Anthony. She died on 18 September 1985, a year after they had celebrated their golden wedding. In 1993, shortly after his 85th birthday, he was made a Doctor of Bradford University in recognition of his services to television.

**Leonard Miall**

Thornton Howard Bridgewater, television engineer: born 1 June 1908; engineer in charge of outside broadcasts, BBC Television 1946-62; Chief Engineer 1962-68; OBE 1965; married 1934 Jean Bartlett (died 1985; one son); died 28 February 1997.

## Isabelle Lucas

A prolific stage actress during a career that spanned 30 years of West End musicals such as *Gone With the Wind* and the original National Theatre production of Peter Nichols's acerbic comedy *The National Health*, Isabelle Lucas won widespread recognition on television as the Severities, as Norman Beaton's wife in *The Forsytes*, Britain's first all-black situation comedy. More recently, she appeared in the all-fiction soap opera *EastEnders* as the disapproving mother of black lesbian hairdresser Delia Alexander.

Born in Canada in 1927, she

was the daughter of a chef from Barbados who worked on the Canadian Pacific Railway. Lucas acted in amateur productions as a teenager in Toronto before moving to London in 1954 to train as a singer. The following year she made her West End stage debut in the revue *The Jazz Trains* at the Piccadilly Theatre, a production that also gave Bertice Reading one of her early successes.

Lucas went on to carve out a distinguished musical career that included appearances alongside Elisabeth Welch and Millicent Martin in *The Crooked Mile* (1959), and as

Barbra Streisand's maid, Emma, in *Funny Girl* and Mamma in Harold Fielding's acclaimed production of *Gone With the Wind* (1972). Her last stage musical role was alongside the vaudeville star Jack Clifford in *Look to the Rainbow* (1985), but the actress' other West End roles included appearances in the straight play *The Genius and the Goddess* (adapted from an Aldous Huxley novel, 1962) and the Neil Simon comedy *The Sunshine Boys* (1975).

Other landmarks in Lucas's stage career included playing the first black Martha in Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia*

Woolf? at the Connaught Theatre, Worthing, and her first appearance with Norman Beaton, in the musical *Bakerloo to Paradise* (1969), which failed to make an impact and did not reach the West End. With the National Theatre, she acted in George Bernard Shaw's *Back to Methuselah* (alongside Derek Jacobi, 1969) and the world premiere of *The National Health* (1969), both at the Old Vic, as well as *Cyrano* (Cambridge Theatre, 1970) and *Tiger* (New Theatre, 1971), with Norman Beaton and Maureen Lipman.

When she was cast as the Leader of the Bacchantes in the

National Theatre production of *The Bacchae*, Lucas objected to Sir Peter Hall's insistence that all the female characters should appear nude and won a partial victory by taking to the stage carefully draped. She also acted in *Trinidad Sisters* (Donmar Warehouse, 1988), Mustapha Matura's black version of Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*, and the Nurse in Dame Judi Dench's production of *Romeo and Julia* (Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park, 1993), her final stage performance.

Her few feature films included *Miracle in Soho* (starring John Gielgud, 1957) and *Out-*

land (alongside Sean Connery, 1981), but it was as Pearl Foster in two series of *The Forsytes* (1976-77) on television that Lucas gained serious popularity. She and the celebrated black actor Norman Beaton, as her husband Samuel, played the parents of a South London immigrant family. Among those playing their three children were the comedian Lenny Henry and the actress Sharon Rossie.

Lucas also played "bald, black, lesbian mother" Valma in the sitcom *Agony* (1979); Pearl, one of the staff at Ashvale Ad-vertising, in two series of *My*

*Husband and I* (1987-88); Gertrude in the children's series *Bluebirds*, starring Barbara Windsor, two characters in *EastEnders* - a district nurse, 1985, and nine years later Alice Alexander, who found it difficult to come to terms with her daughter Della's revelation that she was gay - and an old flame of the Peckham barber Desmond in the Channel 4 sitcom *Desmond* (reuniting her with Norman Beaton). She also made appearances in the television film *A Caribbean Mystery* (1983) and the mini-series *Elis Island* (1984).

**Anthony Hayward**



Lucas: career in musicals

Isabelle Harriet Lucas, actress: born Toronto, Canada 3 December 1927; married 1957 Maurice Jennings; died Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey 24 February 1997.

## Births, Marriages &amp; Deaths

## BIRTHS

**CASEY:** On 21 February, to Carol Lawson, wife of Adrian Casey, a daughter, Charlotte Jane Lawson Casey.

## DEATHS

**CHANG:** Gerry Yuh Cho, born 30 October 1901 in Hong Kong, passed away 13 February 1997, he is survived by his loving fiancée, Pauline, and his loving family in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Private services will be held.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, please telephone 0171-293 2012 or fax to 0171-293 2010. Charges are £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

## ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

**TODAY:** Prince Edward, President, attends a screening of *A Journey of a Lifetime* and *The Gipsy King* by the Children's Film Unit at the British Academy of Film and Television Arts, London W1, and opens the Thames Film Studios, Hampton Wick, Surrey. The Princess Royal, Patron, Scottish Rugby Union, attends the Scotland v Ireland International Match at Murrayfield Stadium, Edinburgh. The Duke of Kent, Patron, the South Bank Foundation, attends concert by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, at the Royal Festival Hall, London SE1.

## Changing of the Guard

**TODAY:** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10. **TOMORROW:** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am. **F** Company Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.5am. Band provided by the Coldstream Guards.

## Marriages

**Mr C. G. O'Farrell** and **Miss N. C. Mayersberg**  
The marriage took place on Friday 28 February at St James Norland Church, St James's Gardens, London W11, between Charles O'Farrell, eldest son of Mr and Mrs George O'Farrell, of Wamberal, New South Wales, and Natasha Mayersberg, daughter of Mr and Mrs Paul Mayersberg, of Chelsea, London. The bride was given in marriage by her father.

## Birthdays

**TODAY:** Mr Harry Belafonte, actor and entertainer, 70; Mr David Broome, show jumper, 57; Mr Douglas Bunn, founder, All-England Jumping Course, Hickstead, 69; Mr Nigel Cowley, cricketer, 44; Mr Roger Daltry, singer and actor, 53; Mr Andrew Faulk, actor and MP, 74; Sir Alton Green QC, former Director of Public Prosecutions, 62; Air Chief Marshal Sir Lewis Hodges, former Deputy Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces, Central Europe, 79; Mr Martin Jones, MP, 50; Sir Michael Kerr, former Lord Justice of Appeal, 70; Professor James Lister, paediatrician, 74; Mr Mike Read, disc jockey, 40; Commandant Dame Nancy Robertson, former director of the WRNS, 88; Mr David Scott Cooper, solo yachtsman, 55; Mark Todd, athlete, 41; Maj-Gen Philip Tower, former Commandant, Royal Military Academy, 80; Mr Brian Wallis, golfer, 57; Sir Gerald Whelan, chief executive, Rael Television plc and Vodafone Group, 70.

**TOMORROW:** Ms Pat Arrowsmith, peace campaigner, 67; Miss Margaret Barbieri, ballerina, 50; Mr Harry Blech, founder of the London Mozart Players, 87; Lady Moyra Browne, former superintendent, St John Ambulance Brigade, 79; Sir Leonard Crossland, farmer and for-

mer chairman, Eaton Ltd, 83; Rear-Admiral Sir Sir Charles J. Innes, former Director of the Naval Education Service, 67; Lord Elton, former government minister, 67; Mr John Gardner, composer, 80; Mr Mikhail Gorbachev, former president of the Soviet Union, 66; Sir Donald Gossling, joint chairman, National Car Parks Ltd, 68; Mr Ronald Green, former chairman, Meyer International, 77; Lord Howe of Troon, engineer, publisher and journalist, 73; Cardinal Basil Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, 74; Dame Naomi James, yachtswoman, 48; Mr Nicholas Jarrold, ambassador to Latvia, 51; Miss Jennifer Jones, actress, 78; Sir John Manduell, composer, and former Principal, Royal Northern College of Music, 69; Mr Hugh Monro, Headmaster, Clifton College, 47; Mr Robert Simpson, composer, 76; Mr John Tusa, managing director, Barbican Centre, 61; Mr John Peter Rhys Williams, rugby player and surgeon, 48; Mr Ian Woosnam, golfer, 39.

## Anniversaries

**TODAY:** Births: Frédéric-François Chopin, composer, 1810; Lytton Giles Strachey, author and biographer, 1889; Alton Glenn Miller, bandleader, 1904; Dennis Thomas Campion, poet and composer, 1920; Mack Gordon (Morris Gittler), lyricist, 1909; Jackie Coogan, actor, 1914. On this day: 1,500 French Huguenots were massacred at Vassy, 1562; the Spectator was first published, 1711; slavery was abolished by Pennsylvania, the first US state to do so, 1780. Today is the Feast Day of St Aubin or Abbanus of Angers, St David or Dewi, St Felix III, Pope, St Rudensind or Rosendo and St Swithbert.

**TOMORROW:** Births: Sir Thomas Bodley, founder of the Bodleian Library, 1545; Bedrich Smetana, com-

poser, 1824; Kurt Julian Weill, composer, 1900; Desha J. In Wesley, founder of Methodism, 1791; David Herbert Lawrence, novelist, 1930; Howard Carter, painter and Egyptologist, 1939. On this day: an attempt was made by Robert Maclean to assassinate Queen Victoria, 1882; the French prototype Concorde made its first test flight, 1969. Tomorrow is the Feast Day of St Chad or Cædca, St Joavan of Brittany and The Martyrs under the Lombards.

## Lectures

**TODAY**  
Victoria and Albert Museum: Gareth Williams, "The Frank Lloyd Wright Room", 2.30pm.  
Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Corinth in Context (I)", 1pm.  
British Museum: Hilary Williams, "Thorvaldsen in Rome 1797-1838: The Scandinavian Canon?", 1.15pm.

## Lunches

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office**  
Mr Malcolm Rifkind QC MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, held a luncheon yesterday at 1 Carlton Gardens, London SW1, in honour of Mr Yevgeny Primakov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

## Dinners

**St David's Day**  
London Welsh Celebration  
Sir John Meurig Thomas FRS was the guest of honour at the 94th St David's Day Celebration Banquet held yesterday evening at the Savoy Hotel, London W1. Mr Alun Thomas presided and spoke.

## Putting noble ideals into ancient religions

## faith &amp; treason

Christians have been persecuting Jews for 2,000 years, which makes Dr Jonathan Sacks's recent praise for a 'Judaean-Christian tradition' all the more puzzling. What exactly is it? asks Andrew Brown.

The art of propaganda lies in nouns, not verbs. Once you have said that your opponent is a heretic, a bigot, or a happy-clappy, it is irrelevant what they do. Their character is indelibly stamped. And the same principle applies to praise: there are certain standards which function as benchmarks for good behaviour and as rallying flags in a struggle with the forces of darkness, and one of the most pernicious of these is the Judeo-Christian tradition.

It made its most recent appearance in Dr Jonathan Sacks's articles plugging a forthcoming book earlier this week in what the *Daily Telegraph* used to call "another newspaper". He finished with a ringing endorsement of "the Judeo-Christian tradition, predicated on the sanctity of life, the priority of right over might, and the imperatives of justice and compassion for the vulnerable and disenfranchised, [which] has survived for almost 4,000 years, while the great empires which persecuted its adherents have crumbled and vanished".

Seldom can so much nonsense have been summoned in support of a noble ideal. What exactly is this Judeo-Christian tradition? There is undoubtedly an Abrahamic tradition: a line of descent in three of the world's great religions from the Old Testament, Islam, Christianity and Judaism all acknowledge a common descent from the myths of Abraham, and all pay allegiance to the Ten Commandments. This has not prevented any of these religions from persecuting the others when they had the chance. On the contrary, the common descent of Judaism and Christianity is integral to the history of Christian anti-Semitism.

As far as I know, the idea of a specifically "Judaean-Christian" branch is an im-

port from America, where it has only really become popular in the last 50 years. It would have made very little sense to speak of this tradition before the Holocaust, and little political sense to speak of it before the establishment of the state of Israel. In the context of American politics, where there is a powerful fundamentalist lobby that manages to combine theoretical anti-Semitism with practical pro-Zionism in the interests of hastening Armageddon, this idea makes perfect sense. But it is a strange thing to set up as a moral authority.

Christianity, Judaism, and Islam all function as moral traditions; and all of them are religions which have learnt, developed, and preserved a great deal about the purposes of human life. But almost all of this has been in progress away from their common roots in the Bronze Age proscriptions of a jealous God. Dr Sacks describes the tradition as "predicated on the sanctity of human life". I do not see how anyone could come fresh to the Bible and see any regard for human life at all in the early parts. From the extermination of every liv-

ing thing outside the ark to the ethnic cleansing of the promised land, the story is one of utter disregard for human life except when it suits God's purposes.

The religious imagination is an extraordinarily fertile and creative faculty which can bring love and justice out of the most unpromising soil. But there is no use pretending that the Pentateuch is terribly promising soil. In a sense this makes the moral achievement of the Jews so much greater; it does not license anyone to preach on the excellence of the Ten Commandments as a sort of constitution document for modern society.

The second part of Dr Sacks's above also invites examination: the tradition, he says "has survived for almost 4,000 years, while the great empires which persecuted its adherents have crumbled and vanished." At first sight this has a wonderful resonance, especially from the Jewish point of view. The Jews have inspired survival, 4,000 years. The trouble is that for nearly half of that period their main persecutors have been Christians: what price the "Judaean-Christian" heritage then?

Talking about a "Judaean-Christian" tradition is wrong and misleading, above all because it ignores what traditions actually are: they are not prescriptions which can be read off and applied. They must be lived to be understood. It is a familiar argument against religion that people can act wickedly from the most beautiful ideals. But the opposite difficulty is just as great: that people will act virtuously as a consequence of horrendous theories. I have no doubt that Dr Sacks is an excellent man, and his family an engine of virtue. But if we wish to renounce society, we should do as he does, and not as he says.



# It's time for Labour to loosen its tongue

In the thesaurus, you soon get from "mountain" - what the Tories have now to climb to get anywhere near winning the election - to "bluff", what that party's spinners and spokespeople are going to be doing a lot of this weekend. Imagine you are huddling in a Central Office committee room. What are your options as you confront the by-election's arithmetic of voting shares and turn-out? You could go for broke, unseat your Prime Minister and make a fresh start (though it is hard to see where the proverbial men in suits could be found; and what they would do if John Major rounded on them with one of his favourite expletives). But even if you replaced the leader, you would still face the intractability of the Tories' problem: Europe. What is the point of a new leader unless he also offers a fresh start on Europe?

Stage right, voices urge that the Tories' electoral mountain would be so much easier to climb carrying the Union flag. Like an ex-smoker who can see the packet on the shelf, the Tory party has been eyeing the nationalist option. It admires the wrapping, even counts the cigarettes, but, so far, has resisted lighting up. With good reason. Euro-scepticism would swiftly give way to outright rejection of union with the rest of

Europe. To whoops of delight from the Murdoch press, Sir James Goldsmith would find his clothes ruffled. The Tories would lose their Chancellor and provoke a lurid split in their parliamentary ranks. For what? The idea that Europe can be turned, at this stage, into an election winner - a phantasm. There is no winning "independence" margin out there in the psephological thickets. No, anti-Europe sounds like a suicide letter read out at an inquest, not an election victory strategy. The Tories will some day have to face the European battle in their own ranks, but not yet. Opposition - powerlessness - is the place for settling scores and refining new identities. The party's best bet is to soldier on. It is a national interest, too. Whatever happens to single money, whatever reshaping occurs to and within the European Union, Britain's future is "European", and no political formation contending for parliamentary power can be anything else.

Labour, corseted in its self-control, was quick yesterday to present itself as anything but complacent. Its spokesmen are well-schooled in their humility. That is genuinely not the risk facing Labour. The risk, rather, is that voters will be deprived of a proper election campaign. Labour understandably wants to avoid putting a foot wrong. Garri-



ous John Prescott could give lessons to the Cosa Nostra these days. For team manager Tony Blair, the tactic is definitely *catenaccio*. But the overwhelming victory in the Wirral, on top of a huge opinion-poll lead, suggests that Labour's election strategists do not need to be so transfixed by their 1992 horror. Of course, there are lessons from previous defeat. It is clearly sensible to steer Tony Blair a million miles away from a Sheffield rally of the kind that so embarrassed Neil Kinnock. But fear of talking itself into danger may now risk Labour talking too little. Commendable determination to avoid making promises to the electorate that cannot be delivered could end up with a failure to communicate with the electorate at all.

This is not about posters and soundbites or the instant rebuttals and "clarifications" that Labour - all credit to the professionalism of its operation - has turned into a fine art. Nor is it about presenting bills of fare and inviting the electorate to tick its heart's desire. The paradox is that Tony Blair and his party are now so far ahead that they can afford to have a frank and open conversation with voters. Indeed, they would benefit by doing so, and so would our democracy.

This huge lead could be an excuse for Mr Blair and his colleagues to slam down the

hatches, dive dive dive, order battle silence, and then surface to celebrate watching the whole Tory fleet go down around them. But what about the rest of us? We want - need - to know what Labour intends in power. Instead of clammring up, Labour should open up - use its advantage to prepare us for Blair's Britain. Warn us about the difficulties that lie ahead. Invite us to understand the harder choices that must be made. Voters will, if anything, feel flattered at not being taken for granted. And they will be less shocked when Labour in power turns out to have a new and unexpected face. Good government will mean educating people about how much can be afforded, and what a government can accomplish, over how long.

Labour should behave like an agent who has won the contract, but needs to show how keen she is to close the sale. Voters are clearly saying they want a change. But government is not just about laying out a pitch, making sure to keep your tie straight and never saying anything except the obvious. It is about re-educating a country in Labour's view of the potential for change. Wirral South means Labour can anticipate government with some confidence. It shows that Labour has done enough to get elected. Enough, however, is not enough.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Nato is breaking Major's 'informal' promise to the Russians

Sir: Dr Dunne of St Edmund Hall, Oxford (letter, 24 February) mistakes the occasion and character of the West's undertaking not to advance Nato eastwards.

It was made during discussions about the reunification of Germany, by John Major as Foreign Secretary and James Baker as US Secretary of State. Unfortunately for the Russians

it was made "informally", not written down or recorded in any subsequent *aide-memoire*, let alone treaty, and therefore neither the British nor the American government consider themselves bound by it.

I put down a question in the House of Lords about this, after Russian officials had begun complaining about it - including Mr Gorbachev in

London last year - and the answer came from the Foreign Office that there was no "formal undertaking". There was no denial of the informal undertaking, of which the Russians have apparently produced a rather confused tape.

That the Russians should have thought an Englishman's - or an American's - word might still be his

bond showed naivety and a lack of diplomatic professionalism. All the same, there is a sense of betrayal, and it is no wonder they are not too keen now on any simple "political charter" with Nato which might turn out no more binding than this other "political" undertaking.  
Lord KENNEDY  
House of Lords

### Send down the clones

Sir: Fay Weldon's suggestion, cited by Andrew Marr ("Galileo, Copernicus - and now Dolly?", 26 February), that the great and the good should one day be rewarded with cloning permits, leads me to hope that the long-running "nature versus nurture" debate may one day be ended by the spectacle of a eminent judge being obliged to send to prison, for numerous crimes, a delinquent young clone of himself.  
SIMON DAY  
Bristol

Sir: Any engineer will tell you that it is (relatively) easy to design a product such as an aircraft or a computer program that will do what it is intended to do. It is much more difficult to ensure that it doesn't do what it is not intended to do.

By all means clone living creatures, but just because one sheep has been successfully test-flowed does not mean that some future cloning experiments will not lead to catastrophic crashes. Professor CHARLES HUGHES  
Felstowe, Suffolk

Sir: Human cloning would eliminate the need for men, but not for women. Would this be a good thing?  
ROBERT A SANDOW  
London W4

### Living folk arts of England

Sir: The belief that canal boat art is the only surviving indigenous folk art in England is erroneous (report, 21 February). The "dressing" of crooks, clerks and market stalls with ramshorn, beaded, pressed and carved, has been practised for many generations.

Ramshorn has been used in many countries for providing the hook at the top of the shepherd's crook but in England the farms were large enough to support a full-time shepherd. The long winter evenings gave time for the shepherd slowly to compress and bend the horn into shape, over the tall "chimney" oil lamp. Carving the horn into animal shapes followed.

There are about a thousand members of the British Stickmakers Guild, who, during the summer months, at agricultural fairs, hold "best stick" competitions. Mercifully, the art world and academia have taken little notice of this craft, practised by the untutored and unselfconscious in garden sheds and barns.  
PETER MACKENZIE  
Hornchurch, Essex

Sir: Derbyshire well-dressing still continues, and involves production of mosaic pictures inlaid on moist clay with flower petals, leaves and other natural materials. Another surviving English folk art, also ephemeral, is the "sanding" of surreys in Knutsford, Cheshire on Knutsford Royal May Day. This involves men with bags of dyed sand creating mottos and patterns on the ground.  
ALEXANDER CHABLO  
Manchester

### Rough justice

Sir: As a national serviceman in the Royal Pioneer Corps in the Fifties I was frequently involved in preparing paperwork for courts martial ("MoD braced as judges outlaw courts martial", 26 February). They all had three things in common. The prosecuting officer was an intelligent, ambitious captain (he became a brigadier). The defence was conducted by a rather gormless National Service second lieutenant. I don't recall anyone being found not guilty.  
JOHN AULTON  
Alcester, Warwickshire

## LETTER from THE EDITOR

Here is a minor dilemma of the kind that faces all newspapers. On Thursday evening, we "knew" the result of the Wirral by-election. Opinion polling can be wrong, but for the Conservatives to have held the seat, the polls would have had to have been wildly, extraordinarily, massively wrong. All the ordinary evidence, culled from weeks of reporting, canvassing and analysing, would have had to have been equally out. We also knew that our early pre-result editions would be read by people who had heard figures on radio or television.

So the dilemma was this: did we run a story saying "Labour wins Wirral", which was true (but not yet); or one saying "Labour hopes to win Wirral", which would have been safe, but would have looked unbearably wet and ignorant the next morning? After heated discussion, we went for "New Labour motors home", above a picture of the cheery candidate and his wife in the back of their car. Clear enough. But what if the polls were wrong, went the cry. Well, said the sub-editor, we could always say it meant, "New Labour motors home... to London to work out what went wrong in the Wirral by-election". This ranks as the least convincing journalistic alibi heard in the office this year.

Why do all newspapers, including this one, have a slightly flattened, smudgy look? Knowing people tell me it's the "bundler", the print site machine which parcels papers up. This week I went to our Watford print site to see *The Independent* thunder through the presses. I was struck by the glossy, pin-sharp freshness of the colour and words when they first emerged, slightly damp and warm, smelling, to an editor's nose, better than new bread. So what happens? The bundler, a harmless looking creature, is not the culprit. It is simply that the papers are stacked in lorries for hours, and the weight presses down on the colour and print. They look flattened because they have been. I just thought you'd like to know.

One of the odder, but more enjoyable meetings of the week was breakfast with the Serbian

opposition leaders who have swamped the streets of Belgrade with pro-democracy demonstrations for many weeks. The bearded and charismatic Vuk Draskovic, a man straight from Dostoevsky, told drill tales about the effects of dictatorship on his fellow countrymen. One was a deep-seated fear of people in power and a corresponding caution about voting. Recently, Draskovic had visited a rich supporter and found his house filled with portraits of himself. The man was flustering, generous and scathing about the Serb regime. But he wound up the meeting by warning: "I will not vote for

'Labour hopes to win Wirral' would have been the safe headline, but it would have looked unbearably wet and ignorant the next morning

you. I vote for Milosevic." When Vuk asked why, the businessman nervously but firmly replied: "I will not vote for you - until you are elected."

Lunch at a television company included a short discussion about cloning and medicine. Another guest was Ken Livingstone, who worked as a theatre assistant in a London hospital in the Sixties. He told a chilling story. Apparently, back then, a high proportion of people who had open heart surgery mysteriously died during the operation. Eventually, an American doctor queried whether it was entirely sensible to use the eight to 10 points of blood needed for the operation straight from the fridge. The global medical equivalent of a stunned silence followed. Across the world, patients had simply been chilled to death. Once hospitals started warming the blood, the death rate fell dramatically. Never let it be said that this column fails to find something to brighten your Saturday morning.

Andrew Marr

### QUOTE UNQUOTE

At the roots of his hostility to her [Margaret Thatcher] is a macho streak which sees only a subservient role for women, however talented, and a resentment that a woman achieved the supreme office which he coveted and which was denied him - Lord Tebbit, on the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine

The voters did not just vote against a discredited Tory government, they voted for New Labour - Ben Chapman, winner of the Wirral South by-election and the area's first Labour MP

Wouldn't you love to be cloned? I think I would. This has nothing to do with vanity, with thinking the world would be a better place if there was another one of me going on after I'm dead. It is pure curiosity - Richard Dawkins, Professor of Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University

Low inflation is the product of sound Tory policies. You may be able to clone a sheep but you can't clone successful Chancellors - Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer

Britain has long adopted the ostrich position when it comes to teenage sex - Alison Hadley, national policy officer of Brook Advisory Centres

The English aristocracy is now only the middle class with knots on - Vivienne Westwood, designer



Man at arms: Lord Armstrong (right foreground) during the visit of the US general Ulysses S Grant (fifth from left) to Armstrong's Elswick works, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in 1877. In the background is a 100-ton muzzle-loading 17.2-inch gun  
Photograph: Vickers Defence Systems

Sir: Stephen Goodwin reports (22 February) that WG Armstrong was "suspected of piracy" the Victorian gun barrel design of Captain Alexander Blakely. This "tale of murky dealing in the arms trade" seems more appropriate to a *Tod Slaughter* melodrama than to historical fact.

Armstrong addressed the problem of artillery design at the request of the Duke of Newcastle, Minister of War, in December 1854. This was because of the poor performance of the almost medieval British field guns during the Crimean War. Armstrong, aged 44, had already achieved fame because of his interventions in the field of hydraulics and for his researches into static electricity. By 1858, Armstrong had produced

### Tales from the Victorian arms bazaar

- and proven in trials against six rival designs - a revolutionary field artillery system, the notable features of which were breech loading, polygroove rifling and elongated, fused projectiles. The metallurgy was important, and Armstrong undertook much research into the technology of barrel construction. Essentially, he adopted a steel liner on to which were shrunk layers of wrought iron: a technique already well established in the manufacture of small-calibre guns.

Mr Goodwin reports that Blakely's claims were refuted by Armstrong's family. However, Armstrong was aged only 58, with 32 more years to live, when Blakely died, so he would

have responded to claims of a scandal in person. I went through all his many surviving papers and correspondence before producing a biography in 1983. There is no evidence that he secretly borrowed Blakely's ideas.

Armstrong's patents covered more than just barrel construction. By giving them to the government, he lost substantially, since the government set up its own establishment to make guns to his design. His order book dried up immediately and the ordnance part of his business survived only through exports.  
PETER MCKENZIE  
Vickers Defence Systems  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Sir: The contention that arms sales enable Britain to "punch above its weight in diplomacy" ignores the reality of the contemporary global arms market ("British lion claws a king-sized stake in the world's arms bazaar", 26 February). The increasingly competitive scramble for defence contracts in the post-Cold War era has made the world's arms bazaar a buyer's, rather than a seller's market. Importers are not only able to arrange favourable economic agreements; they can also exert political leverage, so eager are the exporting nations to retain contracts in the shrinking global market.  
LIZ CLEGG  
Arms Trade Programme Co-ordinator  
Saferworld  
London WC1

### British guilt over the Benin bronzes

Sir: Thomas Sutcliffe (article, 27 February) suggests that the restitution of another country's cultural treasures "should not be decided by reasons of politics... but by a free competition of reverence".

Where the Benin bronzes are concerned it is indeed the issue of "reverence" that so exercises Africanists and the Nigerian government. Not only are the bronzes unique, but they are the finest example of casting in the "lost wax" technique anywhere in the world. Sutcliffe then points out that they would have much less value in Lagos than they do here and that to send them to Lagos would be to "deplete their power". The bronzes were not taken from Lagos but from Benin City, capital of the once independent state of Benin. In that city stands a large, reverently maintained museum, many of its walls hung with photographs of the bronzes that adorn the walls of Western museums. A visit to Benin museum leaves any Western visitor with an overwhelming feeling of guilt and sadness.  
NIGEL EVANS  
London W4

### Children from poor homes thrive at fee-paying schools

Sir: I hope the information Mr IM Perry imparts to his students is more accurate than the figures he quotes in his letter referring to the Assisted Places Scheme (26 February).

The current cost of the scheme, which helps academically able children from low-income families to attend independent schools, is £117m, not £200m. Next year, as the scheme expands, it will be £141m. The doubling of the number of pupils in the scheme will be

achieved over several years if there is no change of government. Nor is this an "enormous state subsidy" to schools, which could fill their over-subscribed places with full fee-payers.

Almost 40,000 children currently benefit. They come from families with an average annual household income of only £10,900. They demonstrate the wisdom of the investment in their education by achieving outstanding examination results; research last year indicated

that they do better by up to three A-level grades than their contemporaries of similar abilities in other kinds of schools.

Underfunding of other parts of the education service should not be corrected by denying opportunity to tens of thousands of children from poor families.  
DAVID WOODHEAD  
National Director  
Independent Schools Information Service  
London SW1

### Keep in lane and stay on the side of the angels

Sir: You report (27 February) a 28 per cent drop in accidents on the busiest section of the M25 after the introduction of variable speed limits, which discourage lane-changing. The method of driving thus encouraged - staying in lane - is the opposite of that favoured by P G Russell-Smith (letter, 25 February). Those of us who stay most of the time in the middle lane of a motorway, instead of

swinging constantly between lanes 1 and 2, may be on the side of the angels even if we have no God-given right.

I didn't find motorway driving in France and Germany any safer than in Britain.  
NIGEL SEYMOUR  
Lower Slaughter, Gloucestershire

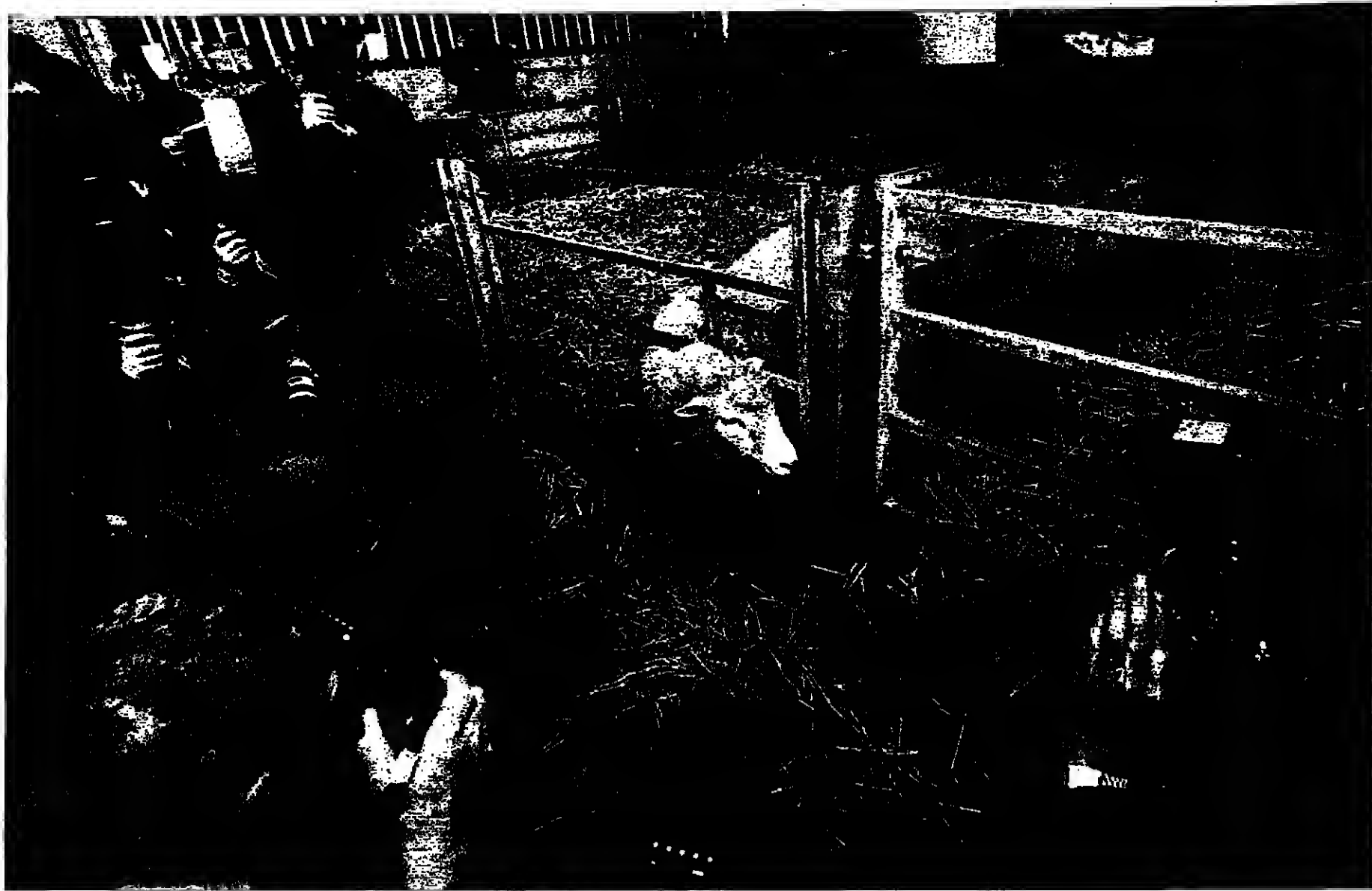
Sir: May I point out to P G Russell-Smith that if I maintain 70mph, it is

indeed my God-given right to drive from London to Newcastle in the middle lane of the motorway. There's no point in ducking and weaving between groups of slower vehicles. And if Mr Russell-Smith sat 500 yards behind me at 70mph we would all get there safely and at the maximum legal speed.  
SOLDFIELD  
London W3



## the saturday story

Dolly the clone is the story of the decade, maybe even the century. Why? Because she embodies our greatest fears and hopes, says Peter Popham



The sheep of things to come: Dolly captivates the world's media at her first photo-call

Photograph: Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert

## The sheep that shook the world

This was the week when, thanks to Dolly, the cloned sheep, the United States rediscovered William Blake. "Little lamb, who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee?" intoned the editorial column of the *Christian Science Monitor* solemnly.

In Dolly's case, of course, the answer was Dr Ian Wilmut of Roslin Laboratories near Edinburgh. Dolly's mild, myopic features nuzzled out of front pages across the world as, not for the first time and certainly not for the last, the whole planet went clone crazy.

Prominent columnists made the most dramatic comparisons. James K. Glassman in the *Washington Post* conducted his own one-man Dutch auction. "Dolly is the biggest story of the year, maybe of the decade, or even of the century," he enthused, thereby echoing the view of Joseph Roth, nuclear physicist and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, that Dolly's creation was equal in importance

to the building of the atom bomb.

It was a lot for a mere sheep to take on board. Along with Blake, innocence and the atom bomb, many of the 20th century's nastier ghosts rose from their tombs and clanked their chains. For although the use of the idea of cloning in science-fiction goes back only half a century, and only entered popular discourse after the publication of Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock* in 1970, the idea that man might—or must—control the quality of human breeding, and that human beings might be mass-produced for particular functions just like widgets in a factory, is one of our favourite nightmares.

Wells explored the idea in *The Time Machine*. Huxley in *Brave New World*, and large swathes of intellectual opinion in Britain and elsewhere backed the idea of practical eugenics in the 1920s and 1930s. Only after Hitler came to power and began to put the ideas into practice for the creation of a master race did everyone realise that the whole

idea stank. Eugenics remains as solemn a taboo as antisemitism, which helps to explain why German reaction to Dolly's advent has on the whole been both bleak and forceful.

"Germans are extremely sensitive to the issue," Peter Benninghoff-Luehl, an expert in genetic engineering at the Konrad Adenauer Institute, said. "Because of our history, there would be near-unanimous outrage here if anyone ever tried to clone a human." *Die Welt* agreed: "The cloning of human beings would fit precisely into Adolf Hitler's world view... there is no doubt that he would have used this technology intensively if it had been available at that time. Thank God it wasn't."

The peculiarity about the Dolly bombshell, as the German reaction shows, is the degree to which the world was ready for it. To the great mass of people outside secretive scientific circles, the atomic bomb, even as it burst over Hiroshima, was a profound and terrifying mystery. Besides feeling terror and shock (and gratitude), no-one knew what

to think for weeks and months afterwards.

In the case of cloning, however, the first shoe dropped way back in the 1960s, with the cloning of plants. We've had the best part of 40 years to get our responses ready. "It's unbelievable," raved Lee Silver, a biology professor at Princeton University, for whom the announcement came just in time for a rewriting of the first chapter of his forthcoming book. "It basically means there are no limits. It means that all science-fiction is true. They said it could never be done and now here it is, done before 2000." Scientists were astonished and the rest of us had our joke-books to hand.

The Munich newspaper *Abendzeitung*, harking the solemn German response, printed five identical pictures of Chancellor Helmut Kohl over a front-page banner headline reading "Genetics researchers say they could now clone Kohl." Other lucky candidates for cloning swam rapidly into view elsewhere. "Imagine five Michael Jordans playing five other Michael Jordans," invited syndicated Washington DC columnist George F Will. Others soon raised the point that, as the *Washington Post* editorialised, "The people likeliest to succumb to the temptation are just the people one least wants to have around in perpetuity." In other words, the megamanics, the narcissists, and all those people willing to cough up

\$120,000 to have themselves frozen throughout eternity on the off-chance of something turning up. If it is these people rather than the meek who are going to inherit the earth, perhaps the German paper *Han-delsblatt* was right to rumble out the warning. "With the cloning of an adult creature, humans can put an end to evolution."

The fantasies about cloning, whether about happy neo-clones or awesome Jordan clones or

teased and titillated us with its horrors and charms.

Just a month ago, the notion was revived in a new form in the *Independent on Sunday* in an essay by Tom Wolfe introducing the ideas of the American sociologist Edward O Wilson, who, attempting to clinch the age-old nature versus nurture argument decisively in favour of nature, has stated that the human being is not born a *tabula rasa* waiting to be filled by

### Many of the 20th century's nastier ghosts have risen from their tombs and clanked their chains

evil slave armies, take us straight to the heart of why this is a topic that has given us delightful frights for a century or more. It is the most solemn belief of our civilisation that every person is born unique; it is also our experience of each other, and the basis for our reliance on such devices as fingerprints and DNA testing.

But for nearly 200 years, we have been teased by the achievements of industrialisation, of the mass production of identical objects. At least since the invention of photography, the idea that identical human beings might also be turned out in some great Xerox machine has

experience but rather as "an exposed negative waiting to be slipped into developer fluid." For example, as Wolfe goes on to expand, quoting identical twin research at the University of Minnesota, "an individual's happiness is largely genetic. Some people are hardwired to be happy and some are not."

Wolfe sees this decisive shift of the debate in favour of the nature tendency gathering force as the millennium approaches. "Today... barely three years before the end of the millennium, if your appetite for newspapers, magazines and television is big enough, you will quickly get the impression that there is nothing

in your life, including the fat content of your body, that is not genetically predetermined."

That is the cultural context into which Dolly, in her flawed innocence, has crash landed. Wolfe sees a culture-bracing itself for the imminent announcement not only that the soul is dead, but that it never existed. "Exposed negatives waiting to be slipped into the developing fluid of experience" is all we have a right to imagine ourselves to be. Scientists will in time reproduce us as readily as chocolate bars, and the resulting clones will have as little connection as a chocolate to anything beyond the contingencies of existence. All the illusions which have nurtured our civilisation will by then have burned away (leaving us, Wolfe implies, hopelessly floundering).

Perhaps this hysterical juncture is a proper moment to stop and assess—for once again, the apocalyptic and the rapidly optimistic have hitched themselves to our wagon and are dragging us deep into a sci-fi horror future.

For one thing, the intensely loaded word "clone" might usefully be replaced by the phrase "identical twin". As a correspondent to the *Independent* pointed out, identical twins, like clones, share all their DNA; and identical twins (but not clones like Dolly) also share nine months of incompressible intimacy inside the womb. Identical twins can of course be hard to

tell apart, but no-one doubts the distinctive humanity of each twin, despite their twin-ness. The words carbon-copy or Xerox are never applied to twins, not because they are identical but because they are plain wrong.

As for the correctness or wrongness of the "exposed negative" metaphor, one of the long-range benefits of the Dolly breakthrough may be that, if and when human beings are successfully cloned, scientists will finally have the wherewithal to lay the nature/nurture debate to rest. One way or the other, we will know for sure whether and to what extent we are born or made. Until then, the jury remains out.

Accept, at least for the sake of argument, that all the talk of slave armies and eugenics and master races and brain-dead organ factories is so much titillating nonsense, passed around gleefully as our ancestors passed around tales of ghosts and witches. Does that mean that Dolly should hold no terrors for us? Instead of alarming ourselves, should we be toasting a (theoretical) way to end to the extinction of all endangered species?

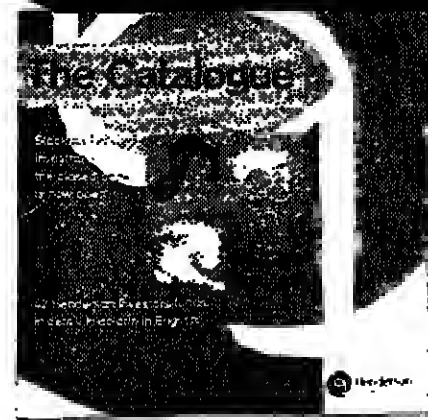
Not altogether. The real cause for anxiety about human cloning, surely, concerns the psychological predicament of the cloned individual. This is not a predicament unique to cloning, but is also raised by many of the new possibilities created by advances in embryology, whereby, for example, babies can be born to long-dead parents.

The creation of Dolly raises this anxiety anew, and with special intensity. George Will wrote in his *Washington Post*, "Connections with parents, siblings and ancestors are integral to being human." How will an individual fare when shorn of all such connections? Do we not risk bringing into being a uniquely profound form of existential loneliness? Arguably, it is only in a society such as ours where family relationships are already far more attenuated than elsewhere, that such a step could be contemplated without horror. In our insensitivity, we could produce children who have good reason to hate their (non-)parents with a special passion.

The good news is that, outside of murder, they probably won't be able to do much about it. The Americans have thought this through already. Sue Goetnick, life sciences writer of the *Dallas Morning News*, quotes John Robertson, professor of law and ethics at the University of Texas at Austin, who is very clear on this point. "Any person born through cloning would have no right to sue for damages," she writes before quoting Professor Robertson: "Texas and most states don't recognize claims that I have been wronged by being born in that way." Well, not yet they don't.

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## jo brand's mum



Jo is away in Spain, and I know that this time it is Madrid rather than Malaga and the Prado rather than the Pizzeria. She has persuaded *The Independent* to trust me with the column, thus enabling me to realise journalistic ambitions that were early, but short-lived. This week's struggle for words has identified that writing is a darn sight more demanding than listening and talking, those essential social work skills.

On Friday, the first day of the week for Saturday columnists, I stood in my Ludlow kitchen and cheered with Michael Hickey, Vincent Hickey and Jimmy Robinson. I cried with Michael Hickey and his Mum, and I felt an intense sense of joy at the triumph over injustice. I wonder, do those Tory ministers who were so "comfortable" with the original guilty verdict feel any sense of self-doubt, and might there be a public apology? As I think about those two splendid women, Anna Whelan and Ann Skeet, I am proud to be in the family of women, and I feel an envy of the strength of those particular women that

allowed them to stand up against the gross institutional dishonesty and legal inertia. What lessons there are for those wanting to tackle the injustices in our society with which, I am sure, those same Tory ministers feel comfortable. We need strong women backed up by decent and honest men; thank you Mr Nichol and Mr Foot. Sadly such a description doesn't seem to fit any of the political parties.

Classic FM's adverts aren't a bundle of laughs, with numerous charitable appeals scoring high on the cringe factor, and with the NSPCC's pre-Christmas appeal leading the field. This week, though, they have redeemed themselves. The water companies of England and Wales are proclaiming their public-spirited approach to service provision with little vignettes describing their laudable activities, and finishing with "just one of the success stories the water industry can tell". I haven't had such a good laugh out of an advertisement for a long time, and if it should work well perhaps the agency

could set about selling Douglas Hogg as the farmers' friend.

The turn-on of the week was found in unexpected quarters. *The Sleeping Beauty* hardly promises erotica, but Birmingham Royal Ballet came up trumps in the form of Anthony King's Bluebird. I can't think of many performances that could raise the temperature by several degrees in the auditorium of an afternoon matinee – but then there can't be too many thighs like his around.

So the big hair brigade is not plagued with bad hair days. We discover that a large chunk of the Legal Aid fund finds its way into the coffers of individual QCs. The

figures quoted by the Lord Chancellor's department range from £300,000 to more than £500,000. There is a rider which somehow doesn't massively reassure me. It seems that these payments relate to cases closed in 1995/96 and, as the Chairman of the Bar says, "These figures do not represent annual earnings so no real conclusion can be drawn from them." How about "There are some nice little earners to be had out of limited taxpayers' funds"? It would be good to be able to sit in court in the future and not hear witnesses harassed on the subject of the compensation they may be hoping to claim or have claimed already, a tactic used by barristers to illustrate how worthless is the evidence

being given, because the individual has a desire to have some financial reward for the suffering he has experienced.

I telephoned Jo to let her know that the column was written, and discovered that she and her mate were in a Turkish bath. I was impressed by the liberality of the Spanish: mixed Turkish baths... But I was exercised by the question of where the bathers put their mobile phones. An almost immediate call back wiped out my surreal image of steam swirling around the mounds of male and female bodies to the tune of ringing mobile phones. It seems they were in a Turkish bath.

Thank you Jo for this unusual example of nepotism, thank you editor for the opportunity of five minutes of fame, and thank you Ashley Coombes for the photo session. My photo of you is great. If your photo of me is not so good then I shall take comfort in knowing that the process was good even if the outcome was not, one of the major defences of a social worker.

Joanne Brand

هكذا من الأصل



## HRH on your PC

A privileged preview of the Royal Family's majestic Web site

## David Aaronovitch

I was reported yesterday that the Royal Family plans to open a Web site on the Internet. But - after binging a footman - I am able to give readers of Saturday's *Independent* (terrific value at 60p) a sneak preview of the Queen's homepage:

[Large coat of arms, bon, unicorn, etc.]

Welcome to Majesty Web site - the only Net venue for all the information, gossip and news about Great Britain's Royal Family, as it goes about the business of representing Britain and defending the faith.

Press here for entry to Royal Heritage, four round the palace of your choice in one of two guided trips: Brusque - with the virtual reality HRH Prince Philip, Extra Slow But Gracious - with HM the Queen Mother. Or visit the site of an important historic event in the dramatic tale of the world's most famous royals. Click and see real-time re-enactments of these places and events: The Great Gallery, Windsor, 1933, Queen Victoria's drawing room, Osborne, 1883. The bedroom at Highgrove any night in August 1984. A third-floor apartment, Mayfair.

Sound gallery. Press here to relive those great Royal moments:

King George's visit to the East End, 1941 (including the famous "lord love yer majesty"); The Coronation of 1952; A Silver Jubilee Street Party in the Wirral, 1977; The Royal Wedding 1981 (hear Diana mess up that name again!); The Squidgygate tapes; Panorama; Ruby Wax; Fergie and the chimp.

Go on a tour of the flora and fauna of the estate of the Duke of Cornwall. Prince Charles is your guide. Or visit the BigEars Homepage for news and views on organic farming, architecture, the teaching of English literature, or the Bushmen of the Kalahari.

Is there a child at your PC? Then try Beatrice and Engenie's Kids' Korner. Features include a special children's advice page on handling moves - and, of course, Animal Adventure, where the different bores of shotguns needed to bring down anything furred or



feathered are discussed simply and frankly. Or how about Willy's Arcade Game, where you pit yourself against a handsome prince for the coveted title "Doerstalkers"?

For something more adult click here for Fergie and Diana's Internet Agency Column. Discover the Princess's answers to your most frequently asked questions on bulimia, shopaholic, the other woman, second time around, or making a million.

Also available: health and beauty tips, including manicures, pedicures (manual), pedicures (oral), gym clothes tested, getting out of limousines without showing one's knickers (advanced course).

Press here for full-colour portraits of the Royal Family including those hands!

Fancy a trip to the Royal Leisure Pages, with Tara Palmer Thompson as your on-line hostess? From the comfort of your own armchair, experience skiing at Klosters or soaking up the sun in Mustique - places you could never hope to visit in person! Or go with Tara to the royal party of the week, and find out what Edward and Sophie are up to (nothing, we're sure), or Princess Margaret's views on what makes a great chaser. In season we take you to Henley, Ascot, Goodwood and the Royal Box at Wembley.

Finally, click here for the Queen's Kool Sites. Royal families of Eastern Europe, Debra's Homepage, Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting 1996, Mrs Thatcher's demise, 1990. Hyperlink to Queen Noor of Jordan's Harempage, English Heritage, The Save Nicholas Soames Campaign.

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# Don't shoot the piano tuner, he's only gone to Cuba

by Jonathan Glancey



## Jessica Mitford's son stands accused of breaking the Trading With The Enemy Act for shipping pianos to Havana. His chosen form of defence is ridicule

Havana - salsa, son, jazz, disco, all Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 31 trembling uncertainly from the open door of a run-down shack in a Havana suburb? No!

Come not! It's certainly an unfamiliar sound, especially when played by a ragged-trousered teenager with a grin as wide as the Straits of Florida.

Ludwig's stentorian chords tangle with the bells of hundreds of new Chinese "Flying Pigeon" and "Friendship" bicycles whirring along Havana's 3rd Avenue, while inside this improbable *casa de musica*, yellowing busts of Ludwig Van rattle and roll on top of a Bechstein upright, gnawed by termites, as Romantic Germany's finest reaches a heroic if wobbly conclusion.

"That wasn't me playing," says Ben Treuhaff, piano tuner and embargo-breaker of Berkeley, California. "I play Beethoven's sonatas a little too fast and hard for Cuban tastes, or anyone's taste for that matter. The great thing is that there are more and more Cubans wanting to play the piano. The sad thing is that it's hard to get parts and so many pianos are broken or out of tune."

"I've been running my 'Send a Piano to Havana' programme for 18 months now and taken 35 pianos and \$3,500-worth of parts, mostly bass strings, from the States to Cuba. Whether people want to play Beethoven or boogie, I don't mind. As a piano nut, I just want them to have the chance to learn and to enjoy playing."

Jesse Maria Gaspari is learning. "My Beethoven is not all that great just yet, but thanks for listening," he says. "I only got a chance to play him just before Christmas. Sheet music is hard to get in Cuba. Paper to print it on also. It's much simpler just to improvise with local sounds. As for pianos, they're as rare as a new car. Send us some more, if you can; we can make good use of them."

To get 35 pianos to Cuba has, you may have guessed, got Treuhaff into hot water with the US federal authorities. "I stand accused of felony piano-tuning," he says, trying hard not to laugh. Why? Because Washington imposed a trade embargo on the island in February 1962 and 35 years on, any US citizen who buys so much as a three-peso shot of rum runs the risk of being prosecuted under the antique Trading With The Enemy Act, as if schmoozing in a bar in Old Havana were the equivalent of selling Grumman Hellcats to the Imperial Japanese Navy the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The trade embargo is a bizarre act of pique on the part of Washington, which, stirred up by the Cuban American National Foundation, aims to

topple the 38-year-old Castro regime, and dreams of turning Havana into Miami and Cuba into Florida. Despite Congress's best attempts to starve the island into submission (or insurrection against Castro), Cuba refuses to give up its independence.

"When I went out a second time recently," says Treuhaff, "the US Treasury threatened me with a fine of \$1.3m and a 10-year prison sentence." For sending pianos to Cuba? "During the Gulf war, US companies were able to ship medical equipment and drugs to Iraq, but if they sent them to Cuba, they are in danger of being busted and their personnel fined or imprisoned. I went out and back dressed as a piano. If they were going to arrest me when I got back home, they'd have had to have taken a cardboard upright into custody."

"When in Cuba, I send postcards from Havana's Jose

Martí Airport to the state officials in charge of my case. My case worker is Ms BS "Betsy" Scott, of the Foreign Assets Control Department of the US Treasury. Give her a call and ask her about me. I do; but Ms Scott, wise to Treuhaff's game, refuses to play."

"Bringing a postcard at José Martí Airport is a criminal offence, of course, for a US citizen, so I send them to Senator Robert Torricelli, too. Bob's the guy who peened and pushed through the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, which really tightened American screws on Cuba. It is such repressive stuff that even anti-Castro Cubans felt the need to protest. After all, they've got family and friends here. It is hard to be as nasty as Bob when your grandchildren or nephews and nieces are wasting away while Americans get fatter and fatter. Bob's address, by the way, is 728 Hart Senate

Building, Washington DC 20510, if ever you want to write or look him up."

To date, Torricelli has refused to reply to Treuhaff's missives, while Ms Scott's Treasury department has held off from nailing the piano man. Even an official "cease and desist" order and a fine of \$10,000 have yet to be enforced.

Treuhaff's tactic of helping individual Cubans to play the piano while holding Washington up to ridicule is clever, if dicey. It is also very much in the spirit of his late mother, the writer and human rights activist Jessica Mitford. Ben is Jessica's son by her second husband, Bob Treuhaff, the celebrated civil rights lawyer.

A rebel to the core, Mitford was a card-carrying member of the Communist Party living and working in the States at the time she was subpoenaed by Joe McCarthy's US House Committee on Un-American

Activities. Mitford's tactic was to encourage her opponents to make themselves appear ridiculous. Her son is clearly a chip off the old block. Which US federal body is going to arrest, bankrupt or imprison a liberal and extremely likeable Californian piano tuner for brightening up a few poor lives by shipping pianos to beleaguered Cuba? The first to do so will be the subject of international scorn. Treuhaff knows this. Ms Scott knows this, and so do Robert Torricelli and Bill Clinton.

As Treuhaff wrote to Torricelli this week, "Your Cuba

Democracy Act was calculated to ratchet up the embargo at Cuba's darkest hour, and I guess it was meant to cause Cubans to revolt against our old enemy [Castro]. That didn't happen. Instead, the shortages of food and medicine meant that the kids became a bit more asthmatic and the adults got skinnier than ever, and on the streets of Havana and Santiago de Cuba the embargo was universally condemned. Today, Fidel's market reforms are gradually solving the food problem. But the kids are still sick."

Skinny and wheezing, but eager to learn the piano, Jesus Maria Gaspari's pal Camillo Gagarin (after the Soviet cosmonaut) Arbenz is turning the pages of the Beethoven score. "I hope to go to the National Music School next year. Sure, I'd like to eat a lot more, but the piano will be my way to success."

If he makes it, will he want to make a break to Miami? "No, I'm happy to be Cuban, but I'd like to play in Paris or Madrid. Things are changing here: I'm confident I'll get the chance."

Maybe. Since Torricelli's act was successfully steam-rollered through Congress, the Cuban government has signed a plethora of lucrative joint-venture deals with foreign companies world-wide. Last year the number of foreign visitors to Cuba exceeded 1 million, and now that US dollars are freely exchangeable in Havana into Cuban pesos, the economy has opened up and grown (7 per cent in 1996). This is a remarkable about-turn after the grim years from 1990 to 1994, when Cubans were reduced to living like Third World peasants in their beautiful, if crumbling, cities.

Cubans may be beginning to eat adequately, if not particularly well, and the economy is evidently growing, though anti-US feeling is still riding high on the embargoed island. But, because this is Cuba - hot, sexy, Caribbean - there is always time to forget international politics and savor-rattling, and to dance to a little music.

While the US Treasury decides whether or not to shoot (metaphorically, of course) the piano tuner from California, Cubans *salsa* on. And the sound of brass, bass, guitar and rhythmic sticks is underpinned by embargo-busting American pianos stroked and hammered by the likes of Jesus Maria and Camillo Gagarin. Roll over Beethoven, and tell Bill Clinton the news.

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The film can be seen in the 'Correspondent' slot on BBC2, at 6.55 tonight.

# The damaged women of Africa

I have just returned from making a TV documentary in Kaphorwa District - a part of Uganda that is populated by the Sabiny tribe, which still practises female genital mutilation (some people prefer less emotive and condemnatory descriptions such as "female genital cutting" and "female circumcision"). As an African myself, but Westernised, and a feminist, I did not want to make a film that merely attacked the Sabinys for being misogynous "savages".

Yes, there are unprogressive elements, but I had heard that some Sabiny girls and parents were refusing to submit to genital mutilation. And I wanted to focus on these pioneers who are rejecting a practice that not only causes enormous pain, but can also lead to infection, incontinence, permanent disability, infertility, childbirth complications and death.

Kaphorwa is a remote and largely unmodernised, sensationally beautiful, mountainous region near Uganda's border with Kenya. The film crew and I arrived during the "circumcision season" - which takes place every two years, in December.

I hope that we succeeded in making a fairly positive film that did not obsessively dwell on "bad" Sabinys who stubbornly cling to ancient and harmful traditions. But I cannot forget or forgive them. While the Sabiny progressives inspired



Men should not bear all the blame for the shameful tradition of female genital mutilation, argues Donu Kogbara

hope and joy, they were a minority. My trip to Kaphorwa was a harrowing experience.

Girls - aged 13 to 18 - were held down in village clearings while their clitorises were sliced off, with razors and without anaesthetic. The atmosphere was festive - much drinking, cheerful chanting and merry dancing - accompanied this macabre public circus. And the girls, though stoically silent during and after the operation, were clearly in agony and shock. Blood trickled down their legs. They could barely walk.

I wondered how many of them would be dead or crippled by Easter. It is hard to believe that this butchery is still condoned in most African countries. Three months on, I still wake up in the middle of the night, fearful and incandescent with rage.

What angers me most is the active involvement of women. Female genital mutilation is often blamed on male chauvinism and patriarchal social values. And it is true that far too many African men will not marry an uncut woman.

It is also true that female genital mutilation originates in a male desire to control female sexuality, to eliminate the female libido, to punish women and to enhance male sexual pleasure (some women undergo infibulation, a radical form of mutilation which leaves them with tiny vaginal openings).

So, yes, let's blame the men for being bastards. But what

about the women who eagerly collude in their own violation? The "surgeon" in Kaphorwa - a woman - gleefully informed me that mutilation is good for women, and that she never mutilates anyone who doesn't want to be mutilated. Many of the mutilated mothers, grandmothers, big sisters and aunts of her most recent victims wholeheartedly agreed with her claims.

The 116,000-strong Sabinys comprise only 5 per cent of the Ugandan population. And the male-dominated Ugandan government does not approve of female genital mutilation. But its exhortations are dismissed or resented by most Sabiny females. Indeed, when Ugandan TV screened a programme about the disadvantages of mutilation, they rebelled, instead of welcoming an excuse to escape the knife. That year, a record number of Sabiny women requested mutilation.

According to a United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) document: "In the early Nineties, attempts to enforce compliance with international health and human rights norms created a backlash. Local (Sabiny) women who had evaded the custom embraced the blade as an act of resistance to cultural interference."

Female genital mutilation is unconditionally denounced by some African women, such as Efua Dorkenoo and Ramat Mohammed, a Ghanaian and a Nigerian who run Forward, an

ill-resourced but dynamic lobbying group based in London. But in Sierra Leone (one of many examples), women's secret societies enthusiastically endorse mutilation. Members of these societies perform the operation and aggressively threaten those who oppose it.

An estimated 6,000 girls are mutilated every day in Africa, and an estimated 120 million living women have undergone some form of genital mutilation. But when I complain about these horrifying statistics, it is often women who tell me to shut up. Women from Somalia and Sudan (where 90 per cent are mutilated) have told me to mind my own business whenever I venture to suggest that female genital mutilation is sadomasochistic, shameful, unnecessary and incompatible with the late-20th century.

In the UK, 13,000 British-born children whose parents hail from Africa are at risk from mutilation. Frequently, it is their mothers who insist that they go back to Africa in the school holidays to be mutilated.

Meanwhile, there are men who are either uncompromising opponents of the practice - or simply not as committed to it as some women. Sometimes it is men who look sheepish when I rant about the evils of mutilation, and it is fathers who logically assess the "benefits" and decide that their daughters should be spared.

Sometimes it is men who

firmly echo my view that there is an urgent need for action. Jackson Chekweto runs Reach, an anti-mutilation initiative in Kaphorwa sponsored by the UNFPA. Chekweto, a Sabiny graduate, uses gentle persuasion and education as tools. He does not lose his temper or opt for a "you backward natives" approach.

Nevertheless, this mild-mannered man does regard mutilation as barbaric; and he seemed much more upset about it than any of the local women I interviewed. Even those Sabiny women who swore that they'd never be willingly mutilated were less obviously furious about the practice than Chekweto.

I do not want to give the false impression that men like Chekweto are commonplace. Nor do I want to undermine the extremely valuable input of the many women of all races who have fought a good fight against female genital mutilation. Female genital mutilation is probably actively opposed by more women than men.

But why should any woman support it? I will, no doubt, be accused of attacking victims who don't know any better. But I'm sick of the view that African women are brainless children who can't be criticised for passionately embracing oppression and possible death.

The film can be seen in the 'Correspondent' slot on BBC2, at 6.55 tonight.



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The film can be seen in the 'Correspondent' slot on BBC2, at 6.55 tonight.









JEREMY WARNER

At best, Gordon Brown is going to be regarded by financial markets as an unknown quantity, at worst a Labour chancellor of the old school, willing to play fast and loose with the economy to advance the Party's social priorities.

## An independent Bank is Labour's litmus test

The conversion of Labour to the cause of sound public finances and low inflation reached a point of no return this week with the announcement by Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor, of an inflation target of 2.5 per cent and new monetary arrangements to back it up. With this statement, Labour seems to have been both baptised and confirmed into the faith all at the same time. Or has it?

What Labour says it will do and what it will actually do when in government are likely to be two very different things. Belief in the new religion is one thing, being a good Christian quite another.

On one level, Labour's refusal to contemplate giving the Bank of England immediate independence in the determination of monetary policy is an entirely practical piece of decision making. To do so would require legislation, and that's going to take a minimum of a year to enact. So even if Mr Brown did not believe the Bank had to "earn" its independence with a period of good behaviour on probation, some kind of transitional arrangement would have to be put in place.

Even so, it is hard not to sense in Mr Brown's manoeuvring a deeper purpose, for part of the intention of these arrangements is to achieve a situation where all risk of conflict between chancellor and Bank in the determination of policy is removed. Mr Brown calls it "depersonalising" the process

but there's actually a bit more to it than getting rid of the media ritual of the Ken and Eddie show. He wants to arrive at a point where the two sides, he and the Bank, are able to agree on policy in nearly all conceivable circumstances.

While this seems a reasonable enough ambition, the effect may well be a rather laxer monetary policy than would otherwise be the case. There is generally compromise and fudge behind the outward appearance of harmony and this setup seems like a formula for just that. In a non-adversarial system, the balance in policy will always be towards the soft option. At this early stage in Britain's attempt to establish credibility as a low inflation economy, is this really the right approach?

To claim that lax policy is actually Mr Brown's purpose here may be to exaggerate the argument, but this could well be the effect. The Bank will be required to set up a formal monetary policy committee to guide the Governor on his advice, which in turn will be half staffed by seconded outsiders. While technically these people will not be Labour placemen - the Court of the Bank of England will make the appointments - in practice they will be; in the real world the Bank is not going to opt for any one Mr Brown doesn't approve of. It can be stated with some certainty, for instance, that Patrick Minford will not be on the short list.

The chancellor therefore maintains an effective right of veto.

The Bank has managed to win one important concession - that all these appointments will be established experts in the field of monetary policy. The powerful vested interests of organised capital and labour don't automatically get a seat at the table. Even so, it can readily be seen that the effect could easily be to dilute and homogenise the decision-making process.

And just in case the committee is still prone to err on the side of caution, notwithstanding the outsiders, the chancellor is proposing to bolster his position through the appointment of a powerful "council of economists" who will work to him at the Treasury. Should the two sides perchance disagree, there is not much doubt who would have the upper hand.

Some of what Mr Brown proposes seems entirely reasonable, given the traditional suspicion with which financial markets hold Labour governments. Could Mr Brown get away with defying the Bank of England's advice, in the same way as Kenneth Clarke has? Certainly not in his first year or two. The markets would wreak a lasting revenge, even though Mr Brown, like Mr Clarke a couple of years ago, might with the passage of time be proved to have been right all along.

The truth of the matter is that, at best, Mr Brown is going to be regarded by financial

markets as an unknown quantity, at worst a Labour chancellor of the old school, quite willing to play fast and loose with the economy if that is the price that has to be paid to advance the Party's social priorities. So in that sense Mr Brown is quite justified in setting himself up with a mechanism that allows him to exercise his judgement without having to pay a ghastly penalty for doing so.

But here's the rub. Mr Brown's judgement is all too likely to be of the variety that factors in a whole host of other criteria besides rigid adherence to the inflation target. Maintaining growth is one. Unemployment another. And, very pertinent at the moment, a third might be the exchange rate. I don't want to over egg the argument here, for in many respects it is hard to fault what Mr Brown is proposing. Quite a bit of what I've been saying might seem unduly cynical and nit picking. But the claim that these arrangements are a significant advance on the way to full independence for the Bank is a very questionable one. Stripped of its rhetoric, what's proposed here is merely the old system in new clothing. The decision will remain the chancellor's; the rest is just a way of making those choices seem as credible as possible.

As for the insistence that the Bank needs first to "earn" its independence, the shadow

chancellor is surely kidding, isn't he? Responsibility for the disastrous, compromised nature of policy over the past 30 years lies not with the Bank but with successive generations of chancellors. Set against such a record, the Bank's error of judgement in advising on an interest rate hike two years ago when none proved necessary should scarcely register at all. That hasn't stopped it being constantly cited to support the case against independence. Since when has erring on the side of caution been an offence greater than that of recklessness? Yet that is what Mr Brown implies when he talks about the Bank having to earn its independence.

Mr Brown holds out the promise of independence, but will he actually deliver? Having already tied his hands so thoroughly on tax and spend, will he really want to surrender monetary policy as well? If Labour takes us into monetary union, it will have no option. Maastricht demands central bank independence, subordinate to the even more distant independence of the European Central Bank. Mr Brown's scope for painting on the broader economic canvass would be more restricted than ever. The issues Mr Brown is grappling with over domestic monetary policy are magnified 10-times over in European monetary union. His failure fully to embrace independence for the Bank of England may be a harbinger of things to come on Europe too.

## Newcastle United looks to score £50m from float

Tom Stevenson  
City Editor

Newcastle United asked the City to pay for its £50m five-year spending spree yesterday, announcing a stock market flotation that will value the football club at between £172m and £193m. The float, which will raise £47.4m of new funds for the club, at least 10 per cent from the private investors who are currently flocking to invest in football clubs, has already been a bonanza for the company's directors.

Newcastle's prospectus showed the company's two joint chief executives and its finance director have shared more than £1m in one-off payments "in recognition of the part they have played in the recent development of Newcastle United".

Freddie Fletcher, the former commercial director of Glasgow Rangers and chief executive for the past five years, received £750,000 from Newcastle's major shareholder, north-east property magnate Sir John Hall. Mark Corbridge, the 33-year-old former Rothschild banker who is now joint chief executive pocketed £300,000 despite being with the club for less than

a year. Jo Dixon, finance director, was paid £100,000.

The directors are also to be paid guaranteed bonuses regardless of the performance of the club or company. Both chief executives will be paid basic salaries of £160,000, but have a bonus worth between 50 and 100 per cent of that figure written into their contracts.

Mr Fletcher, Harrison, the former Rolls-Royce chief executive who was named as Newcastle's first non-executive chairman yesterday, said the proceeds of the float would be used to pay off £22m of debt. A further £12m has been set aside to fund future investments on the stadium.

On rebuilding the north-east's sleeping giant, most famously last year with the £15m acquisition of Alan Shearer, the England striker. From beneath the spectre of relegation to the old Third Division, Newcastle's recovery, funded out of the deep pockets of Sir John Hall, brought it within a whisker of winning the Premiership last season.

The company said yesterday the funds would not be used for a proposed new stadium, for which it is seeking planning permission. It did, however, put a price tag on the development of the existing St James's Park site into an indoor arena, of £90m. No details of where that money would come from were given.

The heavy costs of building and maintaining a top squad were spelled out in yesterday's prospectus. Newcastle made £29m from its four main income streams of gate receipts, television fees, sponsorship and the sale of branded products in the year to July last year. But that figure was wiped out by operating expenses, mainly players' wages, of £23.1m and transfer fees worth a massive £29.9m.

The result was an operating loss of £24m and brought the aggregate operating loss for the past five years to £37.9m.

Mr Fletcher disputed the claim that investors might be concerned by the abrupt departure from his two previous jobs of Newcastle's manager Kenny Dalglish, who took over recently from Kevin Keegan. He attempted to reassure potential investors by saying Dalglish had signed a three-and-a-half year contract and would be in receipt of unspecified share options. No players are to get options.



Bonus winners: (from left) Directors Jo Dixon, Mark Corbridge and Freddie Fletcher (right) have shared more than £1m in pay-offs already. Photograph: Adrian Dennis

According to yesterday's prospectus, 40 million Newcastle shares will be issued at between 120p and 135p each to raise

£51m before expenses. Assuming a price in the middle of that range the shares are being sold at 22.4 times earnings per share, as adjusted for transfer fees and other exceptional items. The company said it would have paid a dividend of 1.5p a share

had it been listed for the whole of the year to July 1997. The retail offer closes on 20 March. The institutional book-building process ends the following day with pricing to be announced on 4 March and dealing due to start on 2 April.

### IN BRIEF

• A Treasury-backed Bill giving building societies extra powers and limited protection against hostile takeovers was yesterday brought before Parliament, ending months of doubt as to whether it would be introduced. The Building Societies Bill seeks to remove restrictions on societies' commercial activities, allowing them to offer a wider range of financial services. Societies will now be able to make up to 25 per cent of loans that are not fully secured on residential property. Until now, only a tiny proportion could be for anything other than mortgages. The Bill will also strip the five-year protection against takeover from any demutualising society which is itself involved in a bid to take over another company.

• FKI is spending £21m on reorganising its electrical engineering division, which includes the Hawker Siddeley Electric Power group and Marelli Motori. The company said the reorganisation was being made to "take advantage of their combined strengths". It said the impact of the recent strength of sterling on overseas earnings had been largely balanced by a relatively strong US market.

• Richards, the specialist engineering group, warned that its profit margins in the UK were being eroded by the continuing strength of sterling and as a result it had to put its Northern Ireland spinning plants on short-time working. The warning, which came at the annual general meeting, was blamed on the near 20 per cent appreciation of sterling against the Belgian franc.

• Cambridge Antibody Technology yesterday announced plans to raise £35m in the latest of a growing stream of stock market flotations in the biotechnology sector. The company, which was started in the bedroom of joint founder and chief executive David Chiswell, has developed what it claims is technology for isolating human monoclonal antibodies, used both in making drugs and in screening other compounds to test their suitability as drugs. The group is expected to be capitalised at around £90m by the mainly institutional placing, with dealings due to start on 25 March.

• China had a 1996 trade surplus with the US of \$10.54bn (£6.5bn), the China Daily reported, quoting a customs report. The report said total trade between the two countries in 1996 rose 4.9 per cent year-on-year to \$42.84bn. Exports to the US last year totalled \$26.7bn, up 7.9 per cent, while US imports totalled \$16.2bn, up 0.2 per cent. However, according to US data, America's US trade deficit with China was \$39.5bn last year.

• SmithKline Beecham has convinced a key panel of the US Food and Drug Administration to recommend approval of its Coreg heart treatment for sale in the US. Last May, the panel refused to approve the drug, saying it needed more information from the British drugs group.

## BA backs plans for 600-seat aircraft

Michael Harrison

British Airways yesterday gave its backing to the launch of a new generation of super-jumbo jets, forecasting that 600-seat aircraft would be flying in significant numbers early in the next century.

In evidence to the Heathrow Terminal 5 planning inquiry, BA's chief executive, Bob Ayling, said the airline remained committed to introducing larger and more cost-efficient aircraft.

"We believe there is a need for such aircraft to be introduced in the early years of the next decade. In our opinion, whilst the phasing of fleet plans in the short term may be reassessed, there is no basis for assuming that larger aircraft, including 600-seaters, will not be flying in significant numbers by the time Terminal 5 is fully operational," said Mr Ayling.

His comments follow Boeing's decision to shelve the \$7bn (£4.3bn) development of a 550-seat successor to the 747 jumbo jet and remarks earlier this week by British Aerospace, one of the partners in Airbus, casting doubt on how committed the European aircraft consortium was to launching its own super jumbo, code-named the A3XX.

Ironically, it was BA's decision not to be a launch customer for the planned Boeing 747-600X which ultimately forced the US aircraft manufacturer to abandon the project.

However, Mr Ayling said that BA's long-term predictions were "unaffected" by Boeing's decision, indicating that it remained keen on adding super-jumbos to its fleet.

## House shortage forces up prices

Diane Coyle  
Economics Editor

House prices were boosted by a shortage of properties for sale last month, Nationwide Building Society reported yesterday. Prices have now climbed 10 per cent from their trough in 1995.

The increase in Nationwide's index was 0.7 per cent in February, about the same as the recent monthly average.

That took them to a level 8.5 per cent higher than a year earlier. The average house price in the UK reached £55,621, according to Nationwide, up from £51,256 a year earlier.

House price inflation has

now been running at above 8 per cent for four months, although the building society is forecasting a rise of 7 per cent for 1997 as a whole.

Paul Sanderson, head of research, said: "Survey evidence still strongly suggests shortages of property for sale remain a problem in many areas, causing upward pressure on prices in certain areas of the market and frustrating many potential buyers."

These shortages, rather than weaker demand or uncertainty ahead of the general election, probably explained why there had been tentative signs of a slowdown in housing market activity, he said.

Both building societies and banks have reported a small decline in the number of loans approved in January.

The British Bankers' Association, representing the main high street banks, said yesterday that the number fell from 32,234 in December to 31,637 in January. This was slightly larger than the normal seasonal decline.

While some economists are predicting house price inflation in double digits later this year as the economy continues to strengthen, others point to the few weaker figures as evidence that the housing recovery has reached a plateau.

For example, the Land Reg-

istry reported a decline in the number of property sales recorded by 34,000 to 230,198 in the final quarter of last year, in contrast to inland Revenue statistics showing that the number of property transactions in December were a third higher than a year earlier.

However, Tim Sweeney, director general of the BBA, said net mortgage lending strengthened "appreciably" in January.

"All told, the major banks' mortgage figures for the month provide support for the view that the early months of 1997 will see further sustainable recovery in housing market activity," he said.

## ScotAm confirms three firm bids

Clifford German

Scottish Amicable the Stirling-based mutual insurance group said it had received just three firm bids, from Abbey National, the Prudential and AMP by the deadline of noon yesterday.

There will now be two weeks of secret bilateral bargaining between the bidders, the ScotAm management and their financial advisers SG Warburg. ScotAm will then take a further two weeks before recommending the winning bid to policyholders.

Jack Birney, managing director of Warburg's corporate finance division, said last night that no details of the individual offers would be released without the consent of the bidder.

Discussions over the next fortnight will concentrate on obtaining the maximum value for policyholders. This could involve around the relative merits of cash, shares, or additional bonuses added to the ultimate value of

the policies. Preserving jobs in Scotland, however, will be only a secondary consideration. The offers differ significantly in detail, but headline figures are misleading, Warburg said yesterday. Cash in hand is not the same as a loan.

Abbey National's initial offer made in January consisted of £400m in cash or shares for ScotAm's 1.1 million policyholders plus anything from £700m to £1bn for the embedded value of the policies. Abbey National said it was willing to increase its sighting offer but it is still not known if it has done so.

The Prudential's last public statement on its offer promised £400m in cash and £400m in bonuses for policyholders, plus a loan of £1.1bn from the Pru's life fund into the ScotAm fund. Prudential also promises to make ScotAm the focus of its operations, selling policies through independent financial advisers.

## EMU 'delay' fears force banks to defend the lira

Yvette Cooper

Central banks in Italy and Spain were forced to intervene in currency markets yesterday to support the lira and peseta after rumours that Germany was about to announce a delay in the timetable for monetary union.

Itters that a single currency might be delayed resulted in dealers selling Italian bonds and buying German debt instead. There were repercussions for bonds and currencies across Europe.

Traders said the Bank of Italy and the Bank of Spain both intervened to defend the lira and the peseta against the mark. The lira fell to its lowest level against the mark since rejoining the ERM in November.

Rumours that the Bundesbank was about to announce a two-year delay to EMU were denied by Bundesbank officials. Nevertheless, traders' confidence in a broad-based euro beginning in 1999 continued to

fall, and Italy bore the brunt of the market reaction. Italian futures contracts ended 2.29 points down at 127.50. Spanish, Swedish, Finnish and Irish government bonds softened too.

The mark strengthened against the lira and the peseta during the day. Traders said the Bank of Italy intervened when the exchange rate reached 998.50 lira to the mark. The currency fell during the day through the psychological barrier of 1,000 lira per mark to reach 1,001.50, its lowest level since it rejoined the ERM at a central parity of 990 lira to the mark on 25 November last year.

Some dealers suggested that the rumours were begun by traders in an attempt to get the markets moving. But jitters were also fuelled by Bundesbank board member Peter Schmidt, who said yesterday morning that "hectic" attempts to meet the deficit criteria were causing only the appearance of convergence.



## SUNDERLAND PLC

### INTERIM REPORT FOR SIX MONTHS ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 1996

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT  
On 24 December 1996 Sunderland PLC ("Sunderland") successfully listed on The London Stock Exchange and I am pleased to announce our first set of interim results as a listed company. The results relate solely to the business of Sunderland Association Football Club Limited ("the Club") and reflect the period prior to the listing.

During the period under review, the Club began its first season within the Premier League. In anticipation of this we strengthened our playing squad over the period and have made an admirable start to life in the Premier League. Today we are placed 14th in the league with 12 games remaining. Although there are some tough fixtures still remaining, we are well placed to fulfil our objective this season of retaining Premier League membership.

Turnover for the half year was £5,176,000 (1995 - £2,513,000) an increase of 106% and profit before tax was £1,082,000 (1995 - loss £1,640,000) a turnaround of £2,722,000. These vastly improved figures reflect, primarily, increased ticket sales as well as improved sponsorship and TV income as a Premier League club. The charge for players' transfer fees in the period has been reduced by £147,000 due to the sale of players. The results incorporate only seven of our nineteen home league matches of the season and are in line with our expectations and the profit forecast included in the Prospectus. As stated in the Prospectus, the Board is not declaring an interim dividend but expects to propose a final dividend in respect of the year ending 31 May 1997 of not less than 3.2p net per share.

Last week we exchanged contracts on the sale of the freehold of Roker Park for £1,300,000 net of demolition costs. Completion will take place on our next financial year. Construction of our new 42,000 seater stadium is on schedule to be completed towards the end of June 1997 giving us sufficient time to complete fitting out prior to the opening home game of the 1997/98 season. Our marketing efforts are progressing extremely well.

R S Murray Chairman

GROUP PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT	28 February 1997		
	Unaudited six months to 30 November 1996	Unaudited six months to 30 November 1995	Audited year to 31 May 1996
Turnover	£5,176	£2,513	£1,169
Cost of sales			
Match expenses	(11,778)	(11,854)	(13,762)
Ground and other direct expenses	(12,211)	(8,971)	(2,302)
	(23,989)	(20,825)	(16,064)
Gross profit/loss	2,187	(38)	1,102
Administrative expenses	(809)	(757)	(1,552)
Operating profit/loss before players' transfer fees	1,378	(795)	(450)
Players' transfer fees	(1331)	(1785)	(11,812)
Operating profit/loss on ordinary activities before interest and taxation	1,047	(1,580)	(12,262)
Net interest receivable/payable	35	(60)	(110)
Profit/loss on ordinary activities before taxation	1,082	(1,640)	(12,366)
Taxation	(56)	-	-
Profit/loss for the period	1,026	(1,640)	(12,366)
Earnings/loss per share	19.2p	158.6p	184.6p

- Notes:  
1. Sunderland PLC acquired the entire issued share capital of Sunderland Association Football Club Limited ("the Club") by way of a share for share exchange on 25 October 1996, prior to that date and up to 30 November 1996 Sunderland PLC did not trade. The only previous financial statement for the Club was for the year ended 31 May 1996. Accordingly, the financial information in the Prospectus of the Club.  
2. The financial information for the six months ended 30 November 1995 and 30 November 1996 contained within this document is unaudited and does not constitute statutory accounts as defined in Section 249 of the Companies Act 1985. The financial information for the year ended 31 May 1996 is based on the statutory accounts for the year then ended. Full accounts for that period on which the auditors made an unqualified report have been delivered to the Registrar of Companies, and do not contain a statement under Section 237(2) of the Companies Act 1985.  
3. The interim statement has been prepared using the same accounting policies as the 31 May 1996 annual statutory accounts.  
4. Taxation has been estimated at the rate expected to be incurred in the full year.  
5. In accordance with details set out in the Prospectus, no interim dividend has been declared.  
6. Earnings per ordinary 1p share in Sunderland PLC have been calculated on the profit/loss of the Company for the period and the equivalent number of shares in issue during the comparable period.  
7. The net assets at 30 November 1996 amounted to £3,953,000. If the net assets at that date are adjusted to reflect the estimated net proceeds of the flotation then the net assets at 30 November 1996 would have amounted to £14,195,000.  
8. This announcement is not being issued to shareholders, or members of the general public, can however obtain a copy of the announcement from the Company's registered office: Sunderland PLC, Roker Park, Sunderland S68 9SW.







# unit trusts

## Foreign Exchange Rates as at 27/2/97

STERLING	Spot	1 month	3 months	DOLLAR	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-MARK	Spot
US	1.5571	1.5571	1.5571	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Canada	0.6945	0.6945	0.6945	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Germany	1.9365	1.9365	1.9365	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
France	1.9365	1.9365	1.9365	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Italy	1.9365	1.9365	1.9365	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Spain	1.9365	1.9365	1.9365	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Japan	160.78	160.78	160.78	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Switzerland	1.4833	1.4833	1.4833	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Netherlands	1.9365	1.9365	1.9365	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Belgium	1.9365	1.9365	1.9365	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Australia	0.6945	0.6945	0.6945	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
New Zealand	0.6945	0.6945	0.6945	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
South Africa	0.6945	0.6945	0.6945	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Hong Kong	7.7563	7.7563	7.7563	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
China	8.2756	8.2756	8.2756	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
India	47.8480	47.8480	47.8480	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
SE Asia	160.78	160.78	160.78	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Latin America	160.78	160.78	160.78	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Other	160.78	160.78	160.78	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000

### OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months
Argentina	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Australia	0.6945	0.6945	0.6945
Canada	0.6945	0.6945	0.6945
France	1.9365	1.9365	1.9365
Germany	1.9365	1.9365	1.9365
Italy	1.9365	1.9365	1.9365
Japan	160.78	160.78	160.78
Netherlands	1.9365	1.9365	1.9365
Spain	1.9365	1.9365	1.9365
Switzerland	1.4833	1.4833	1.4833
UK	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
USA	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Other	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000

### Tourist Rates as at 27/2/97

E Buys	E Buys	E Buys
Australia(Dollars)	France(Francs)	New Zealand(Dollars)
2,040.00	90,300	2,100.00
1,890.00	Germany(Mark)	Norway(Krone)
Austria(Schilling)	2,685.00	2,700.00
55,370.00	Greece(Drachma)	Portugal(Escudo)
Belgium(Franc)	474,100.00	200.00
2,200.00	Hong Kong(Dollars)	Spain(Peseta)
Canada(Dollars)	12,300.00	166.64
Cyprus(Pounds)	Island(Pauna)	Sweden(Krona)
1,800.00	12,025	12.00
Denmark(Krone)	2696,000.00	Switzerland(Franc)
10,280.00	Japan(Yen)	1.75
3,620.00	98,620.00	Turkey(Lira)
Holland(Guilder)	1,050.00	1,750.00
	Italy(Lira)	United States(Dollars)
	1,625.00	







# Rangitikei ready to ascend for Mann

## Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON

For some still dithering there will be chutes this weekend about what to back at the Cheltenham Festival, National Hunt racing's raison d'être. For the racing television viewer though there are seven moderate handicaps, events which are the bookmakers' raison d'être.

First the good stuff. The estimable Space Truckee has his final practice lap at Leopardstown tomorrow under the watchful eye of a course expert who may already be on for the Champion Hurdle. The management at the Dublin track have brought forward Space Truckee's event, the Bramcote Hurdle, so the poor wee lamb will have virgin territory into which to insert his valuable hooves.

The six-year-old is in single figures in some lists for the Champion Hurdle following

successes at Cheltenham and Newcastle which had the stop-watch anoraks throwing their bobble hats into the air. It might seem odd, therefore, that Jessica Harrington, Space Truckee's trainer, believes he will almost certainly get beaten tomorrow.

The gelding is said to be in need of the run and will hardly delight in the soft going either.

In Britain today the tarpaulins will be over the cameras at Newbury, by the time Mr Mulligan, the Gold Cup prospect, completes his serious preparation with some work after racing. The nine-year-old, who was second in the Sun Alliance (Novices') Chase at the Festival last season, has not run since capitalizing at Kempton's final race when on course to finish runner-up to one Man in the King George VI Chase. Tony McCoy, the champion jockey, is coming here and will partner him over two miles round the course. Noel Chance, the chestnut's trainer, said yesterday, "Mr Mulligan is actually ahead of schedule but the gallop will put him spot on."

The ride on another Gold Cup aspirant, Addington Boy, will be in the jobs vacant column following the news that Brian Harding, who had been pencilled in for Gordon Richards' chaser, will not be allowed to ride again until December.

Harding had expected to return to the saddle last Tuesday, but has now learned the circumstances of his fall at Newcastle in December, when he fractured his skull, mean he will be off for 12 months. "When I saw Dr Gerber he told me that he would be recommending that I should have a year off, the jockey reported yesterday. "I thought my fracture was healing and I was feeling grand,

but he said I had some sort of leg tremor, which they called a seizure, when I was conscious."

Harding's rides will go to Richard Hughes if the Irishman's agent, Peter Harris, has anything to do with it. Harris stopped just short of marching down Lambourn High Street inside a sandwich-board yesterday as he expressed astonishment that his client has not been booked for more than his single engagement in the Festival bumper. "It's madness," the agent said. "Richard's had so much success on the Flat, including Group One winners."

In front of the cameras at Newbury, there are some reasons to back RANGITIKEI (nap 2.15) in the most popular televised race of the day. Charlie Mann considers the six-year-old will make an imposing chaser next season, but his progressive form suggests there are more hurdles to be won first.

Sister Stephanie (1.45) should confirm recent two-

ter form with River Mandate, but the first race is more difficult to evaluate. The accidents that have been occurring to Too Flash's opponents might tempt some to look under his forelock in search of three digits. Unless something diabolical happens again, his race should go to the ex-French Mely Moss (1.15).

At Doncaster, the most valuable event can go to Le Mellie (next best 2.00), who appeared to have recaptured his form of last season when third to Call It A Day at Newbury last week. That was in the Cathay Pacific Airways Chase, which somehow sounds more salubrious than today's objective of the Velka Pardubicka Grimthorpe Handicap Chase.

Another possibility is Our Kris (2.30), who fell when fancied for the Triumph Hurdle. He has since appeared to enjoy racing as much as eating glass, though there was a glimmer last time that his competitive appetite had returned.

## More Dash ThanCash to cause rush at 5-2

More Dash ThanCash is a top-rated 5-2 with Coral - William Hill just 7-4 - for the Light Infantry Plate Handicap Hurdle (12.50) at Doncaster. All's Alibi is 5-1 (Ladbrokes) - the Tote go 7-2 for the Velka Pardubicka Handicap Chase (2.00) at Doncaster. The Tote bet on the Mitsubishi Shogun Trophy Handicap Chase (1.35) at Doncaster: 9-4 Destiny Calls, 100-30

### Light Infantry Plate Hurdle - Doncaster 12.50

Horse	Trainer	Owner	Weight	Age	Form	Rating
More Dash ThanCash	Mr J. Harrington	Mr J. Harrington	11-10	5	11-10	5-2
All's Alibi	Mr J. Harrington	Mr J. Harrington	11-10	5	11-10	5-1
Destiny Calls	Mr J. Harrington	Mr J. Harrington	11-10	5	11-10	9-4
William Hill	Mr J. Harrington	Mr J. Harrington	11-10	5	11-10	100-30

## Velka Pardubicka Hurdle - Doncaster 2.00

### Velka Pardubicka Hurdle - Doncaster 2.00

Horse	Trainer	Owner	Weight	Age	Form	Rating
Our Kris	Mr J. Harrington	Mr J. Harrington	11-10	5	11-10	2.30
Le Mellie	Mr J. Harrington	Mr J. Harrington	11-10	5	11-10	2.00
Call It A Day	Mr J. Harrington	Mr J. Harrington	11-10	5	11-10	1.15

### Eastleigh Handicap Hurdle - Newbury 2.15

Horse	Trainer	Owner	Weight	Age	Form	Rating
Our Kris	Mr J. Harrington	Mr J. Harrington	11-10	5	11-10	2.30
Le Mellie	Mr J. Harrington	Mr J. Harrington	11-10	5	11-10	2.00
Call It A Day	Mr J. Harrington	Mr J. Harrington	11-10	5	11-10	1.15

## NEWBURY

1.15: Nick Gaselee is quite capable of producing THE FROG PRINCE to win after a long absence and this consistent sort... a fast record here and is suited by this trip, can outspeed Mely Moss, who may need further, and outjump Newbridge General, who is unimproved at the tip. The view of Too Flash was achieved in weak races.

1.45: TURNING TRICK did well last time to finish fourth in the competitive Great Yorkshire Chase. In contrast, River Mandate was second of only three finishers here last time, but now has Tony McCoy to give him encouragement. Smith's Band won on his debut last time.

2.15: SHERIFFMUR and Rangitikei both come here in fine form but the selection may be better made by the easy ground.

DONCASTER

12.50: MORE DASH THANCASH, particularly impressive when quickening to beat Shepherds Rest by an easy 3/4 lengths over 2m at Windsor last time, stays on fair handicapping, mark, can complete hat-trick. Sea Victor, disappointing last time, may still be the danger.

## HYPERION'S TV TIPS

1.25: ARTIC WINGS, driven out by seven Whippers Delight by seven lengths over 3m 110yds at Fakenham on his most recent venture, should not be overlooked by the return to this shorter journey and can follow up. In truth may pose the most problems.

1.45: WHISPERING STEEL, who stayed on strongly to beat Kikigan by three lengths over 3m 110yds at Fakenham, clearly retains plenty of ability and can go again. Le Mellie, who looks reasonably treated, is rated the chief threat.

2.30: BANKHEAD, who put in another sound performance to beat Scotty by two lengths over 2m at Windsor last time, stays on fair handicapping, mark, can complete hat-trick. Sea Victor, disappointing last time, may still be the danger if bouncing back to form.

## First Show

How they bet on today's televised races

Artic Wings, 9-2 Wee River, 11-2 Cont D'Esurval, 7-1 Fickley, 10-1 In Truth, 14-1 Real Glee, 20-1 Monna Fort, 10-1 Devies

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## sport

## FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP

## Leonard turns into Big Daddy

For England's pack leader, the All Blacks of the late Eighties are the benchmark. Chris Hewett met a genial hard man

Jason Leonard's easy-going approach to a mean and often brutal sporting profession leaves you wondering how so generous a spirit could possibly have spent the last seven years serving time with hard labour in his country's front row. England's pack leader seems too charitable by half: it is almost easier to imagine Si Francis of Assisi as a member of the Corleone family.

Dig a little deeper, though, and you soon uncover the splinter of ice concealed beneath the sunny exterior. No one wins 50-odd caps as a prop forward without mastering the tricks of the trade, from the unfathomable to the unmentionable, and for all his relaxed geniality, the 28-year-old Harlequin is now the Big Daddy of the dressing room. When Jason speaks, the rest listen.

Strangely for a man who lists shamelessly opinionated England predecessors like Jeff Probyn, Brian Moore and John Oker among his influences, Leonard is not much interested in talking a good game. Words come cheap, after all. Yet Jack Rowell, whose phenomenal success as a club coach at Bath owed an enormous amount to clever psychology as well as tactical intuition, regards his most experienced forward as something of a closet orator.

It was to Leonard that Rowell turned during the nervous build-up to the Ireland match a fortnight ago and his choice

was vindicated in the first five minutes as the England pack soaked up the early fire and fury and returned it with interest. When the team re-gathered in Marlow on Monday night to prepare for France, they were greeted once again by that chirpy London accent.

"Yes, I had a word," said Leonard before one of this week's intensive training sessions at Bisham Abbey. "What

*'I wanted this side to be feared and respected throughout the rugby world'*

did I tell them? I told them that I wanted this side to be feared and respected throughout the rugby world. And I said that, not just because it was the sort of thing international players expect to hear in a team meeting but because I genuinely believe we have the potential to win that respect, to command that fear.

"I've been lucky enough to have played in a couple of great England sides but this one could be the best of the lot. I'm not one to brag and I have no patience with idle boasts, but I think we are capable of approaching the standards set by

the All Blacks under Wayne Shelford in the late 1980s. Their rugby was as near perfect as dammit: they had experience and youth, strength and athleticism, pure animal instinct mixed with a touch of the cavalier. It was an explosive mix and I sense a bit of it about us.

"So, the point of Monday's little chat was to make sure everyone still appreciated exactly where we were trying to get to. You can't achieve perfection, but Shelford showed how close you can get. We've played two Five Nations matches and won both by 40 points without playing well. Sooner or later, we'll really click and do someone a lot of damage. Tomorrow would be ideal as far as I'm concerned."

For all his high-flown ambition, the phrase "feet on the ground" might have been coined for Leonard. A Quin he may be, but there is nothing of the Eton and Cambridge in his background - mention the name Virgil to him and he is more likely to think of Thunderbird II than the Aeneid - and the England dressing-room is a better place for his brand of earthy realism. In an age of professional craftsmanship, the silver spoon counts for less than nothing.

Rather like Jeremy Guscott, a fellow comprehensive school type, Leonard climbed through the ranks on the back of his own raw talent to establish himself as a major player on the world stage. Today, he goes toe to toe with Christian Calmano, the



The youngest Englishman to reach 50 caps, Jason Leonard knows that nothing can be taken for granted against France today

Photograph: Peter Jay

soldier from Toulouse, and there are many aficionados of the front row jungle who have the two men level pegging at the very top of the tree. "Good boy, Calmano," he says with one of his soft, reflective smiles. "I'm looking forward to seeing him again."

That carefree line speaks volumes for Leonard's seemingly inexhaustible enthusiasm for life amid the hump and grind. The youngest Englishman to reach a half century of appearances, he has missed only

one match - the 1995 World Cup pool game with Western Samoa, when Rowell fielded a shadow side - since making his debut in Buenos Aires in 1990. When you consider that he suffered a ruptured disc in his neck in 1992 - the worst imaginable injury for a prop - his durability appears more impressive still.

"One of the great joys of being involved at the top level is the fact that you take something with you from every game. No matter how much you think you

know, how many times you've been in the situation before, you never go through an international without learning some sort of lesson.

"When I captained England against Argentina in Phil de Glanville's absence just before Christmas, I learned one of the most valuable lessons of all - namely, never to assume anything about your opposition. We'd looked at the Pumas on video and at no point did we see the half move beyond the outside-half, so we went into the

game expecting more of the same. Of course, they caught us on the hop by playing with width as well as passion and as a result, things began to go wrong.

"But what people tend to forget about that game is the result on the old scoreboard at the end. When it came down to brass tacks, we had enough discipline and enough belief to squeeze out a win. As a performance, it was fairly disappointing; as a victory, it was crucial to our confidence."

Leonard believes the feel-good factor amongst the forwards, in particular, will benefit from Rowell's commitment to continuity. "The really strong English packs of recent vintage built up their togetherness over a period of 20 or 30 internationals and I want to see this unit, which I believe possesses world-class potential, given a similar opportunity," he said. "That sort of timescale would give the boys from Barking close on 90 caps. What price the century?"

## A nation places its faith in Benazzi

At a time when the French nation is struggling to come to terms with Le Pen xenophobia and the recent passing of another town - Vitrolles on the Côte d'Azur - into the hands of the National Front, the presence of a Moroccan as captain of France is heavy with symbolism. Especially among the rugby community which has always cherished its image of a slightly marginal group of free thinkers.

Abdelatif Benazzi, son of Zineb and Mohamed, is not only an Arab, but a practising Muslim, and proud of it. Born and raised in Oujda, near Morocco's border with Algeria, he was the unanimous choice to replace Philippe Saint-André as captain last year when the Tricolores' left-winger was forced to pull out of a Test series

against South Africa with a groin injury.

"Being captain of France, even if it is just an interim, is an enormous thing for me, and I feel very honoured to have been given the role," he says. "It is far more than just a personal victory, but it has not really changed me. In Oujda I am not particularly famous, and my family, as ever, welcomed the news with modesty and simplicity."

As for his Muslim beliefs, they are as discreet as they are unbending. "I have a faith, and it happens to be Islam. But Islam also teaches one to respect others, respect their difference," he says. Religion is central to his life and his success as a sportsman. "It gives me immense strength. Strength to work, to play rugby and to keep

## A captain's talent and strength of character have lifted him above prejudice. Ian Borthwick reports

things in perspective. It is my driving force and, as such, very important to me."

Gifted with immense inner strength and determination, Benazzi, despite a relatively late start in the game, has risen to become one of the world's finest forwards, devastating in defence and with the ball in hand. He is one of the few players to have worn all the numbers from 4 to 8 in international rugby, and even today his true role remains undefined within the French XV. Second row, flanker, or No 8 he is as unclassifiable as he is indispensable to the French, and there is still a possibility that he will play half of today's game in the back row and half in the second row alongside Olivier Merle.

Benazzi first encountered rugby at the Lycée El Ouhada in Oujda, where his PT teacher, Majid Vert, a former second-rower for Morocco, convinced the powerfully built teenager to give up track and field, forget the

discus, the shot and decathlon, and take up rugby. Within a year he was playing for the Moroccan Junior XV and the chain of events which led to his arrival in France reads like something out of an Arab equivalent of the *Boys' Own Annual*.

In 1987, Benazzi, now a full international, was on tour with Morocco in Czechoslovakia where his path crossed that of a touring Third Division French side, Luzern. The power, energy and raw natural talent of the 19-year-old was immediately noticed by club officials who rapidly invited him to come and play in France, and in a matter of months he was playing for the nearby Second Division club, Cahors. His impact was immediate, and after one season at Cahors he transferred to Agen, one of the 17 First Division clubs which attempted to lure him away in the off-season.

Overcoming the racism and distrust which first greeted his ar-

rival in this traditional bastion of French rugby became one of Benazzi's first major victories and now, six years later and with 51 international caps to his credit, he has not only risen to the rank of captain of Agen, but also to that of a genuine local hero.

He has nevertheless remained close to his Arab roots: despite the gargantuan after-match festivities associated with rugby in south-west France he never drinks alcohol, remains a devout Muslim, and even attempted in the early years strictly to observe Ramadan despite the fact that it inevitably falls in the most rigorous part of the rugby season. "I now know that it is impossible to respect Ramadan and play top-level sport at the same time. So I cheat a little, and for all those days where I cheat I make them up later in the year, observing the fast from dawn to dusk."

His captaincy of the French team remains as discreet and understated as the rest of his personality. Benazzi never raises his voice, but despite the inevitable trace of the North African accent so often ridiculed in France, his size, aura and burning black eyes are suf-

ficient to ensure respect. As for today's match against England, Benazzi places it a cut above the other games of the championship. "One of the things I will be saying to the younger players who have never played in England, is that a game at Twickenham is something you will remember all your life. We know the English will start as favourites, but in that sense we have nothing to lose. I will simply ask the players to give it all they have got, to try everything so that at least we don't come off the field feeling frustrated."

He is conscious, however, of the scrappy nature of France's two early games, and of the disturbing number of handling errors which has prevented them from getting their game going. "In a match like this anything can happen," he insists. "We tried a lot of things against Wales, but we also made a lot of mistakes. Our support play was poor, and at times we were just trying too hard, being too busy to allow things to fall in place. We will be looking to eliminate all those small imperfections from our game. But, above all, we are determined not to sit back and just watch England play."



Benazzi: "Twickenham is something you remember all your life"

## The French. And another poultry performance.

(England to win by a 16pt margin: 8/1.)

ENGLAND v FRANCE			
Wednesday, 6.45pm, Live on BBC.			
Forecast the score with France receiving an 8 point start.			
First Tryscorer			
18/11 ENGLAND 18/11 FRANCE (8PTS) 14/1 THE TIE	Winning Points Margin		
8/1 J. Sleighthorpe	5/1 England win by 1-5 points		
9/1 D. Vennart	4/1 England win by 6-10 points		
10/1 T. Underwood	5/1 England win by 11-15 points		
11/1 A. Gomersall	9/1 England win by 16-20 points		
11/1 L. Lattamand	12/1 England win by 21-25 points		
14/1 W. Carrling	11/2 France win by 1-5 points		
14/1 P. De Glanville	9/1 France win by 6-10 points		
14/1 A. Parsaud	10/1 France win by 11-15 points		
18/1 J. L. Sadoyrie	10/1 France win by 16-20 points		
22/1 P. Sadoyrie	60/1 France win by 21-25 points		

SCOTLAND v IRELAND			
Wednesday, 6.45pm, Live on BBC.			
Forecast the score with Ireland receiving a 4 point start.			
First Tryscorer			
18/11 SCOTLAND 18/11 IRELAND (4PTS) 14/1 THE TIE	Winning Points Margin		
8/1 J. Sleighthorpe	4/1 Scotland win by 1-5 points		
9/1 J. Logan	5/1 Scotland win by 6-10 points		
12/1 J. Bell	7/1 Scotland win by 11-15 points		
18/1 J. Sleighthorpe	11/2 Ireland win by 1-5 points		
14/1 K. McCulligan	7/1 Ireland win by 6-10 points		

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For a bet, Ladbrokes are favourite.

## Irish foil amazing Scottish recovery

Scotland produced an incredible comeback in the A international at Myreside yesterday but still came out second best, eventually losing out 34-33 to their Irish counterparts.

Down 20-7 at half-time Scotland twice took the lead but in an amazing finish, with the Scots leading 33-27 with just two minutes of normal time remaining, a pass by their stand-off, Ally Donaldson, was intercepted by Ireland's winger Niall Woods, who raced over for the try.

Michael Lynch's conversion gave Ireland their one-point win, and meant misery for Scotland who looked the better side for most of the game. They were made to pay after their weakness in the tackle gave away soft tries by Ireland's full-back Ciaran Clarke and Woods' first.

His troubles continued in the second half when Graeme Burns' kick was charged down and a lucky bounce allowed the flanker, Eddie Halvey, to score Ireland's third easy try.

Ireland's other try was scored by Niall Hogan from a whirlwind start by his forwards and good driving play by the back row.

despite scoring against England at Twickenham a month ago.

Scotland's other try came from John Kerr with Donaldson converting four of their tries but the Currie stand-off missed a long-range penalty that could have won the game.

The earlier Under-21 international between the countries was a much more clear-cut affair with Ireland winning 31-0.

The Scots were outplayed up front by an Ireland pack that scrummaged powerfully, worked well in the line-out and in open play showed exemplary handling skills.

Ireland's backs were also a cut above their Scottish counterparts, their swift handling, quick running and ease on the ball.

Ireland led 11-0 at half-time thanks to two penalties by Ronan O'Gara and a try by Gervin Dempsey and against the stiff breeze in the second half they adapted well by using their strong forwards in close formation to gain territorial advantage.

Sheldon Coulter scored three minutes into the second half and Scotland's misery was compounded when Ireland scored two pushover tries, the first attributed to O'Gara and the second to their scrum-half Stephen Bell.

Right on full-time Emmet Farrell, on as a substitute, en-

## Return of the prodigal may not stop Scots' slide into ignominy

SIMON TURNBULL

Scotland's fitful form since Arwel Thomas's failed touchline conversion left them three-quarters of the way to a Grand Slam twelve months ago has simply underscored the bottom line that Richie Dixon, the national team coach, has a dearth of world-class talent at his disposal. That stark reality was exposed by Australia and Italy before Christmas and exploited by Wales, with their three-try scoring burst in five second-half minutes at Murrayfield in January, and by England at Twickenham four weeks ago.

At least Tai's return to the union fold, with Newcastle, has afforded the Scottish selectors another midfield option. Jeffrey's one-time Kello comrade suggested with his influential performance in Scotland's 56-11 submergence of an "Emerging Wales" in January that he will have much to offer in his centre pairing with Gregor Townsend, even as a 33-year-old who made his original international debut as a replacement for John Rutherford in the World Cup match against France in Christchurch ten years ago.

Much has been made this week of Tai's second coming. Much too much, in fact. As the captain, Wainwright, put it yesterday: "Some people seem to be expecting miracles from other midfield option. Jeffrey's one-time Kello comrade suggested with his influential performance in Scotland's 56-11 submergence of an "Emerging Wales" in January that he will have much to offer in his centre pairing with Gregor Townsend, even as a 33-year-old who made his original international debut as a replacement for John Rutherford in the World Cup match against France in Christchurch ten years ago."

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Alan, but he has been out of rugby union for longer than his Welsh counterparts."

Wainwright, who moves to his favoured blind-side position in Scotland's back row this afternoon, might have added that more than one re-converted Welshman breathed new life into the old dragon at Murrayfield six weeks ago. The great Scots' Quinell and Gibbs, and Allan Bateman, were also in the Welsh team which subsequently had its tail put between its legs by the Irish. Fortunately for Scotland, the false dawn syndrome was transmitted to the victors in Cardiff that day.

Brian Ashton arrived in Edinburgh on Thursday with his six-year contract but with a team in tatters. Considering that Eric Miller, Eric Elwood and Nick Poppell have, since the Arms Park game, been added to a casualty list which already included Simon Geoghegan and Keith Wood, the former Bath coach could be said to have swapped the Red for the wrecks. The wound of most immediate concern to Ashton, though, is the one that was inflicted by the 17 men who played for the land of his fathers at Lansdowne Road a fortnight ago. The damage done by the five tries conceded in that final 16-minute slaughter could have painful implications if Scotland make an early breakthrough this afternoon.

SCOTLAND v IRELAND			
Wednesday, 6.45pm, Live on BBC.			
Forecast the score with Ireland receiving a 4 point start.			
First Tryscorer			
18/11 SCOTLAND 18/11 IRELAND (4PTS) 14/1 THE TIE	Winning Points Margin		
8/1 J. Sleighthorpe	4/1 Scotland win by 1-5 points		
9/1 J. Logan	5/1 Scotland win by 6-10 points		
12/1 J. Bell	7/1 Scotland win by 11-15 points		
18/1 J. Sleighthorpe	11/2 Ireland win by 1-5 points		
14/1 K. McCulligan	7/1 Ireland win by 6-10 points		

هكذا من الأصل







Blackburn Rovers' mid-season revival owes much to the faithful servant who knows that his 26 years at Ewood Park may soon come to an end. **Guy Hodgson** talked to the man who may be the most successful caretaker manager ever

## Parkes unworried by uncertain future

**A** look under the heading Blackburn Rovers in the Rothmans Football Yearbooks for the seasons 1991-92 and '92-93 is interesting. In the first Tony Parkes is listed as assistant manager, in the second his name appears nowhere. Kenny Dalglish, Ray Harford, Asa Hartford, the list goes on. Parkes seemingly entering into a twilight world populated by football's forgotten many.

In reality, Parkes had not disappeared and was ahead of Harford in the blue-and-white hierarchy – even if you would not know it from the black-and-white print. The message, nevertheless, is loud and unyielding: the permanence of a job in football is like the proverbial verbal contract, not worth the paper it is written on.

A new manager's broom frequently sweeps away people who deserve better, as Tony Parkes discovered at Manchester City. Parkes has been at Blackburn for 26 years but there is no guarantee he will make it to a 27th even if he could claim, with justification, to be the most successful caretaker manager ever. When Roy Hodgson arrives from Internazionale in the summer, it might signal his leaving.

Yet meet Parkes now and he exudes the same outward nonchalance about his future that has marked his relaxed spell in charge of Blackburn since Ray Harford resigned last October. "Come into the caretaker manager's office," he says, knowing no room of that name exists. As he walked past the door he pointed to the place where the prefix should go ahead of the word "manager".

He said, until his face matched the blue of his club's shirts, that he did not want the job on a permanent basis and now, with Hodgson due from Italy, his wish has been granted. It could be an abdication of responsibility or an acute perception of his limitations, but where Parkes goes now is anyone's guess. Certainly it is not within his compass.

"I'm sure the club, the board, the chairman and the owner would want me to stay," he said. "They've actually told me that. But my answer is: 'It isn't up to you. It's up to the new manager'. You can't expect a man to come into a club and work with one hand behind his back which he might feel he's doing if I'm here. It's the manager's decision and if he says I've got to go, it's acceptable. That's part of football."

"People ask me: 'Where's that going to leave you?' and I can't honestly tell them. If I worried about what's going to happen to me every time I've had a caretaker's job I wouldn't go to sleep at night."

Parkes, who was an industrious, "sort of" player with you in the trenches" type of midfielder for Blackburn, has been in temporary charge at Ewood Park on three occasions. After Bobby Saxton, Don Mackay and Harford he has done the upping for a new manager, always surrendering authority with the club in better shape than he found it.

In 1987 he was unbeaten, four years later, after Mackay was sacked,



The Parkes bench: 'We'd had the doom and gloom bit and it hadn't got the results,' says Blackburn's caretaker manager

Photograph: Andrew Cowie/Coloursport

he got 17 out of 24 points and presented the side in eighth position to Kenny Dalglish, who guided them to promotion via the play-offs that same season. This time he has lost three League matches out of 15 and fears about relegation have diminished, if not entirely disappeared.

Hodgson will benefit from this stewardship just as Dalglish did in the past and Parkes, who comes over as the last person to grumble, will be a welcoming figure – even more so since the original choice, Sven Goran Eriksson, left the club close to Parkes' heart in limbo by reversing his decision to come to Blackburn instead of deciding to remain in Italy.

"I'm very happy," Parkes said. "Everybody is looking forward to his coming. He's a big name in world football and Blackburn need someone of that stature to get us back to where we were two years ago. One or two of the players sank a bit when it was clear Eriksson was not coming, so the news about Hodgson

so quickly afterwards lifted them. "I've never spoken to Roy but I expect I'll be flying over to Milan shortly to meet him. It's similar sort of situation to Eriksson, where I went to Genoa. He's got a team to run and pick and so have I, so it's not that easy to find the time. Perhaps we'll get together in an international week."

By then Parkes' principal aim, 14 points to reach his estimate of safety, might have been achieved, which will be no meagre resurrection after Blackburn managed only four draws and no wins in their first 11 Premiership matches and seemed destined for relegation only two seasons after winning the championship. It would not be a total exaggeration to note it as a triumph for humour over adversity.

"I just got the magic wand out and waved it about a bit," is his response to questions about the change he brought. As soon as Parkes walked into the manager's office, the lightness of touch was obvious in com-

parison to the heavy defeat of Harford's final days. When he is being serious, he says being temporary helped – and that he had no ambition to succeed to the job.

"Managers are dour and miserable," he said after one win. "I want to stay a happy-go-lucky chap. Wait until Mr Souness comes, he's a proper manager." On cue, the Southampton boss arrived, the penit slipping out from under the mask of smiles a testimony to Parkes' words.

"I set off to try to be a little bit jovial and laid-back," Parkes said. "We'd had the doom and gloom bit and it hadn't got the results, so let's try and attack it a little bit differently. More jovial, more uncommitted. I did it consciously in the hope it would rub off on other people."

"I'm serious at the night time, don't get me wrong. Not everything is a laugh and a joke but, if you're happy in your job, you do it better. It's a psychological fact. And if you can

keep pressure off people by trying to be humorous, all the better. People are under enough pressure."

"I brought in a couple of players who hadn't been in the side and tinkered with the formation a little bit, but there was no magic formula. Beating Liverpool 3-0 in our first home game after Ray's departure was the turning point. Football, like any ball game, is about confidence and, as the points came in, we got better."

Per Pedersen, a Danish striker, has been bought from Odense for £2.5m to buttress that self-belief, a signing made without reference to anyone in Italy and which reinforces the faith that the club have in Parkes' judgement. It also underlines the heady distance Blackburn have travelled since his first stint as a caretaker. Then he had bought a player, Sean Curry, but he cost £5,000.

"That's the difference between then and now," he said. "From day one when Kenny and Ray came,

things just happened so quickly. We went from being a sleeping, average Second Division club to an all-action Premiership club. We were buying players every day, whoever was for sale was coming to Blackburn. The car park changed almost overnight. We had BMWs and Mercs. The Cortinas had to go."

Which is why Parkes is adamant he will never be in permanent charge of the wheel at Ewood Park. "I wouldn't say I'll never be a manager, but I wouldn't want to be manager of Blackburn Rovers. Possibly six years ago, before we were promoted to the Premiership, that might have been my time. But now, it's a big, big business, you need someone in charge who can bring the players in."

Will that business have space for a one-club, low profile man, no matter how good a servant? "The future for me is 10 weeks," he replied. "What happens from there is too distant. Until I speak to Roy Hodgson, I'm no wiser."

### Tony Parkes: The caretaker extraordinaire

#### First spell:

30 Dec 1986 – 3 Feb 1987  
30 Dec 1986: Blackburn, placed 22nd of 22 in the Second Division, with 17 points from 20 games (six wins, four draws, five losses). Tony Parkes, then team coach, took over for his first spell as caretaker manager. The second spell was:

Played 5 Wins 2 Draws 2 Lost 1

Second Division

Blackburn 1 Portsmouth 0

FA Cup third round

Portsmouth 2 Blackburn 0

Second Division

Blackburn 2 Sunderland 2

Leeds 0 Blackburn 0

Blackburn 1 Oldham 0

3 February 1987: Don Mackay appointed new manager. Blackburn, now 18th of 22 in the Second Division, had not lost in the league under Parkes, and had taken eight points from 12.

Second spell:

2 Sept – 12 Oct 1991

2 Sept 1991: Blackburn, 21st of 22 in the Second Division, with one point from three games, sacked Don Mackay after 2.4 hours of his reign. Tony Parkes, team coach, took over for his second spell as caretaker. His record was:

Played 5 Wins 5 Draws 2 Lost 1

Second Division

Derby 0 Blackburn 2

Sunderland 2 Blackburn 2

Blackburn 2 Port Vale 0

Blackburn 0 Walsley 0

Blackburn 0 Blackpool 0

Blackburn 0 Brentford 0

Blackburn 1 Blackburn 2

Blackburn 5 Plymouth 2

12 October 1991: Just before Jack-off against Plymouth, Wally Budge's appointment as manager is confirmed. Blackburn are seventh of 22, having taken 17 points from 24 under Parkes.

Third spell:

25 Oct 1996 – 7

25 October 1996: Blackburn, 20th of 20 in the Premier League, with five points from 11 games, sacked Tony Parkes, team coach, as caretaker, after sacking manager Ray Harford. Parkes' record so far:

Played 13 Wins 7 Draws 6 Lost 4

FA Cup Preliminary

West Ham 2 Blackburn 1

Blackburn 2 Blackpool 0

Blackburn 2 Blackpool 2

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### No 207 Scarborough

FAN'S EYE VIEW

Stephen Walsh

Is there life after Scarborough? Hardly, to judge by state of the old-timers who walk their Zimmer frames on the Esplanade every afternoon. For Scarborough, as Pete Davies pointed out in a piece in *FourFourTwo* a year or so ago, is a place where people come to die, but then forget why they came.

A year ago, pretty much the same could have been said of the football side – after a lifetime of non-League nil, at the end of last season, only Torquay – and the fact that Stevenage did not have a decent ground – lay between them and a return to the Conference.

It was not just the lowly position that mattered, it was the manner of it. As hefts a seaside club, we were shipping goals by the crateload. The caretaker manager, Mitch Cook, was a worthy trier, but everything he touched turned to dross. The high point of his reign came when, one Friday evening, he took his squad out for a drink in Plymouth. His stated aim of relaxing his too-tense players was achieved the following afternoon: Argyle won 5-1.

I took in the last game of last season with my son – he had a free ticket from the Football in the Community scheme. I prepared him for a certain amount of late-season carnival: but full-scale clowning I had not forecast. The Seaside conceded four to the claret-and-blue clodhoppers of Scunthorpe, and my son (not a bad wit, for an eight-year-old) asked the game-man for his money back.

Dire straits, then – and all this just a decade since Neil Warnock brought the club into the League on a tide of euphoria. Scarborough were a potent semi-pro side, a Working of

their time, and older fans still live off the glory of the non-League days. There were three Wembley trips in the 70s for FA Trophy wins over Wigan, St. Francis and Dagenham. Those old enough to remember tend to regret the transformation from his fish in a small box to tiddler in danger of being thrown off the quayside.

Of course, seaside towns in decline make good copy. The papers loved it when Bulgaria, bulletted in town during *Euro 96*, walked out, cue for much metropolitan sniggering and a visit from Nick Hancock, who sat on the sand in a deckchair with a hanky on his head.

Despite all this, the football club seems to have acquired a bit of buoyancy under the new manager, the former Carlisle United director of coaching, Mick Wadsworth. He immediately impressed by seeming to know a fiasco when he saw one – he released half the squad and made a few wise buys, including the old Sunderland stopper, Gary Bennett.

Scarborough are now trying to play a beautiful game, and they deserve some plaudits; it takes courage to play it on the deck (no pun intended) in the teeth of a North Sea gale. Crowds are up and, with a mid-season dip apparently behind us, the possibility of a playoff place is looming large in our consciousness. Even as profound a sceptic as my son has agreed to return, and he's seen high-flying Wigan and eighth-placed Darlington well beaten on our home patch. And before you ask – yes, it really is called the McCain Stadium, but for once we seem to have something more solid than oven chips to build our future on.

### MAJOR WEEKEND FOOTBALL FIXTURES AND POOLS CHECK

TODAY

3.0 unless stated

FA Cup Preliminary

Man Utd 27 15 9 3 53 30 54

Liverpool 27 15 8 4 45 20 52

Newcastle 26 14 6 5 51 30 48

Arsenal 26 13 9 6 45 28 48

Wimbledon 25 12 7 6 37 28 43

Aston Villa 25 12 7 6 34 26 43

Sheff Wed 25 11 9 5 39 34 42

Sheff Utd 25 11 8 6 39 31 41

Sheff Utd 25 11 8 6 39 31 41

Sheff Utd 25 11 8 6 39 31 41

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**Bittersweet Sugar**  
Glyn Leach on the return of  
a fallen hero, page 29

**sport**

**Parkes takes care**  
Guy Hodgson meets  
unworried of Ewood, page 30

**FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP:** Time for De Glanville to command centre stage at Twickenham for title decider against Tricolores



Jack Rowell (second left) watches his England charges run through their line-out routine under the sweep of Twickenham's stands yesterday in readiness for this afternoon's meeting with France

Photograph: David Ashdown

## England wary of unfamiliar French

CHRIS HEWITT

Rugby Union Correspondent

Olivier Merle's sudden occupation of the moral high ground has provoked as much laughter on this side of the Channel as England might be forgiven for thinking that the French have finally relinquished their notoriously tentative grip on rugby reality. They would be mistaken. Twickenham will be no place for complacent assumptions this afternoon.

There is no doubt that England can win – and win well – for they have seen off better French sides than this in recent years. If Abdel Benazzi, the visiting captain, is to be believed, the Tricolores have only a 30 per cent chance of victory – a figure that just about equates with the suspected fitness level of Benazzi's hugely influential out-half, Alain Penaud – and it will come as no great surprise

if the Red Rose is in full bloom come the final whistle.

But as Tim Rodber, the England No 8, said yesterday, the unfamiliarity of the French line-up only adds to the potential pitfalls lying in the path of the favourites. Had Emile Ntamack, Philippe Saint-André, Thomas Castaignède and Richard Dourthe been strutting their stuff across the greensward, England would have known what to expect. By comparison, the likes of Laurent Lefflamand and David Venditti are, for the time being at least, spectres in the darkness.

The danger for England is that they simply cannot predict how the French will approach what amounts to a Five Nations title decider. Benazzi, a great back-row forward in anyone's language, is hard-headed enough to take the pragmatic line (pragmatic? a French swearword surely). On the other hand, he may just throw caution to the wind on the

basis that his side have far less to lose than their opponents.

Now that really would be worth watching. Penaud and Venditti apart, there are two other members of the Brave back division on view and if Philippe Carboneau and Christophe Lamaison enjoy anything like the space given to them by Leicester in the final of the Heineken Cup in January, England will be playing for pride rather than a Grand Slam when they reach Cardiff in a fortnight's time.

The right attitude will be of the essence for both sides, which brings us neatly back to Monsieur Merle, the man mountain from Montferrand via Grenoble. His view of the English rugby mentality – "very unappealing, for their players are arrogant and pretentious" – might carry more clout were it not for his own reputation as an Alp-sized liquidator with an over-active right fist. As Ricky Evans, an

aggravated Welsh prop, is prepared to testify in court, Merle is no one's idea of a "play up and play the game" traditionalist.

It is, though, true to say that

the French have taken some public steps towards cleaning up their act. Merle, Dourthe and Franck Tournaire have all been suspended for violent transgressions during the past

three seasons and those efforts are in stark contrast to England's under-the-carpet approach. The Rugby Football Union will not want to hear this, but the French are getting it right more often than most these days.

Sensibly, both Jack Rowell, the England coach, and Phil de Glanville, his captain, have spent much of the last week emphasising the supreme importance of discipline. "We became involved in a few things that would have been better avoided during the first few minutes in Dublin a fortnight back and it's essential that we steer clear of that trap against the French," said De Glanville, whose powers of leadership were rightly extolled by Rowell earlier in the week.

Today's match could scarcely be more important from De Glanville's point of view. Omitted from the preliminary Lions squad of 62 and heavily criticised in some quarters for the

perceived anonymity of his international performances, he must prove to his doubters – Fran Cotton included – that he can do more than simply organise the players around him. To be blunt, he needs to catch the eye on centre stage rather than pull a few strings from behind the curtain.

As so often this season, untimely injury has hindered the captain's preparation. The ankle problems that affected De Glanville earlier this week are said to have cleared, but then Penaud is reported by the French to be in the pink as well. The black arts of disinformation are as rife in rugby as in every other walk of life and it will be no shock if both Jeremy Guscott and David Aucagne, the talented stand-off from Pau, make it off the bench and on to the pitch.

With a young English pack showing early signs of impending greatness, De Glanville and his fellow backs should see

more than enough of the ball to secure victory and thus set up a mighty finale at Cardiff Arms Park. Although the French back row looks a class unit, especially now that Olivier Roumat is involved on a full-time basis, the home trio showed enough against Ireland to suggest that they will shade it in the loose. Equally, it is hard to see the French tight forwards forcing Jason Leonard and company into their shells, especially as there is no Olivier Roumat to test Simon Shaw's mettle in the middle of the line-out.

Perhaps more than in any other match this season, the first 15 minutes hold the key. Five weeks ago, Brive caught Leicester so cold that by the time the Tigers realised they had a game on their hands, it had already slipped away. If England can hit the ground running, they should avoid a similar fate.

Leonard and Benazzi profiles, Scots look to 'bat', page 28

ENGLAND v FRANCE			
at Twickenham			
T Stimpson	Newcastle	15 J-L Sadourny	Colonniers
J Sleightholme	Bath	14 L Leflamand	Bourguin
W Carling	Harlequins	13 C Lamaison	Brive
P de Glanville	Bath, capt	12 S Gles	Bourguin
T Underwood	Newcastle	11 D Venditti	Brive
P Grayson	Northampton	10 A Penaud	Brive
A Gomersall	Wolves	9 P Carboneau	Brive
G Rowntree	Leicester	8 C Calliano	Toulouse
M Regan	Bristol	7 M Del Maso	Agen
J Leonard	Harlequins	6 F Tournaire	Narbonne
M Johnson	Leicester	5 O Morte	Montferand
S Shaw	Bristol	4 H Merle	Toulouse
L Dallaglio	Wolves	3 A Benazzi	Agen, capt
T Rodber	Northampton	2 P Pelupis	Dax
R Hill	Saracens	1 O Magne	Dax

Replacements: 16 J Guscott (Bath), 17 D Aucagne (Pau), 18 A Healy (Leicester), 19 M Clarke (Richmond), 20 N Garforth (Leicester), 21 P Gearing (Gloucester), 22 M de Rougemont (Toulon).

Referee: J Fleming (Scotland). Kick-off: 3.0 (BBC1).

## American football could provide model

DAVID LLEWELLYN

Rugby union was yesterday invited to adopt American football's salary capping system and also to seek backing from international companies. Dan Rooney, the president of Pittsburgh Steelers, speaking at a seminar in London on the state

of the game, insisted that salary capping was the only fair system to ensure that no club went broke through exorbitant wage demands, and that the wealthier clubs did not have a bottomless barrel.

"It is important to get everyone on the same page," said Rooney, who had interrupted a busy schedule to speak at the

seminar, organised by Rugby News magazine in association with The Independent.

"The way it works is that the teams pool their gross revenue in a season, and this is shared equally among all 30 teams," Rooney explained. While no maximum wage operates in the NFL, there is a minimum level. Although the salary cap

appealed to the Rugby Football Union secretary, Tony Hallett, also at the seminar, he said it would be difficult, if not impossible, to enforce from a legal and practical point of view.

Rooney invited English clubs to seek overseas investment. He claimed the United Kingdom provides more visitors to Disney World in Florida than any other

country. He also revealed that the Disney Corporation is in the process of building a sports complex. "You have to deal with international sponsors," he said.

"You have to align yourselves with, for example, telephone companies, breweries, banks and the leisure industry as well as major players such as the Heinz corporation, Disney

and Sony. Television has opened the door to advertising and sponsors."

Whether more English clubs have the courage to follow the example of Harlequins and seek international funding – they are sponsored by NEC – remains to be seen but the invitation and opportunity exists. Seminar report, page 29

In Monday's 20-page sports section

Phil Shaw talks to  
Steve Bull, the local hero  
of the Black Country

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## ICC chief wants Test world championship

Cricket

A formally recognised Test cricket world championship, first proposed by the Independent four years ago, could be in place by the end of the year.

Speaking in Johannesburg during the first Test between South Africa and Australia David Richards, the chief executive of the International Cricket Council, said yesterday that he would be seeking assurances from all nine Test playing nations that a formalised world championship would have their backing. "The next ICC meeting is in Kuala Lumpur on March 23 and once we've agreed in principle it's just a question of juggling itineraries to make sure that all the countries play each other home and away over, perhaps, a four-year period," he said. The Independent suggested a system with points awarded for winning and drawing Test matches, away wins worth twice as many points as those at home, and bonus points awarded for series victories.

Matthew Engel, the editor of Wisden, recently suggested an alternative system whereby a team winning a series would get two

points, one point for a draw and no points for a lost series. "The points system suggested by Matthew Engel seems to be the simplest," Richards said.

Richards added: "There is a feeling that we need to reaffirm what the players feel about the importance and status of Test cricket and a world championship would certainly raise its profile. The ICC cannot limit the number of one-day games played around the world – that is up to each individual country – but both Mark Taylor and Hansie Cronje [captains of Australia and South Africa, respectively] have expressed their concerns to me about the hectic nature of modern playing schedules."

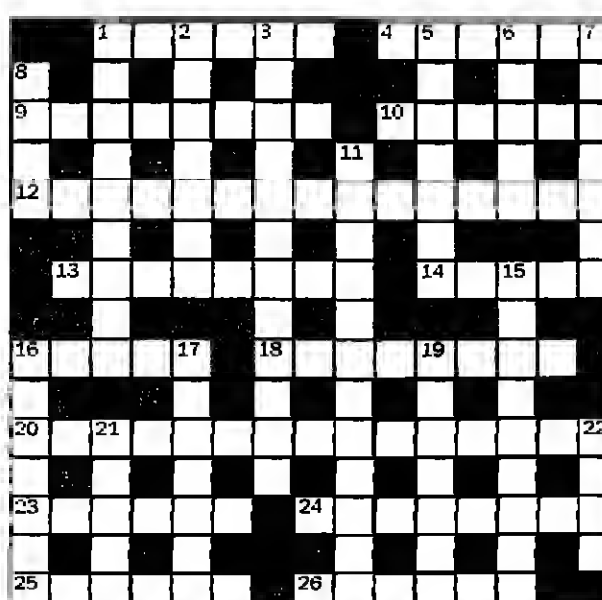
The England management has agreed to allow wives and girlfriends to join the players during the tour to the West Indies next year, the itinerary for which was announced yesterday. The tour will also allow more time for rest and preparation than the tours to Zimbabwe and New Zealand. The party will socialise in Antigua before travelling to Jamaica for the first Test.

S Africa fight back, page 29  
West Indies tour itinerary, Sporting Digest, page 31

### THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

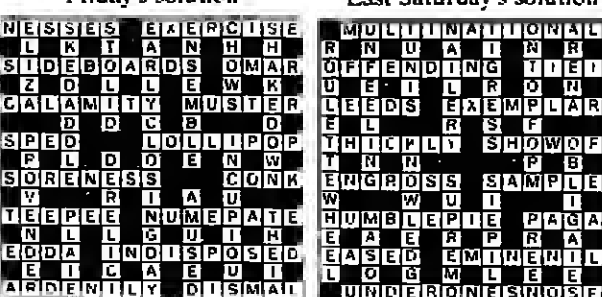
No. 3235, Saturday 1 March

By Phi



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



ACROSS

- Spy group infiltrating most of single party (6)
- Causes annoyance when thrown into river (6)
- Former rioter reformed outside (8)
- Sailor embraced by chap from group of businessmen (6)
- Produces a net deficit? (6,2,3,4)
- She's foot in motion, showing a style of dancing (4-4)
- Bird dog heading off (5)
- Glasses in bits, we hear (5)
- Lancashire town now coming back enthralled by French rock (8)
- Slug repellent not usually seen in garden (6-5,4)
- Hurried to acquire some police rank (6)
- Advanced job that's worried one who's lapsed (8)
- A couple of lines about yesterday's exam (1-5)
- Show annoyance or restraint (6)

DOWN

- Thus to vote unexpectedly will install Conservative on the quiet (5,4)
- Present sounder with the cost of accommodation (7)
- More apathy stirred up about artist's "essential" treatment (12)
- Fool losing head after individual turned up to make a proclamation (7)
- Not entirely fake punch – it goes to the head (5)
- We hear Hebridean island exploded with colour (7-4)
- Communication missing a long time? Confusion results (4)
- Unusual cameo with harvester in full (1-1,7)
- Joke, English, about historical period of prosperity (6, 3)
- A description of Gibraltar or part of Russia? (7)
- Frivolous means of access provided without hesitation (7)
- Made safe with skill, mostly, and with experience (7)
- Topless dive? Lean forward suddenly (5)
- Cute bird's sound cut short (4)

The first five correct solutions in this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hardbacked copies of the new Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to: Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: Suey Nicholson, Llewellyn J. Thorne, Harriet R. Smith, Salizaire G. Knowles, Preston J. Spivack, Harrow.